

**OUTDOOR
INDUSTRY**
ASSOCIATION

**OUTDOOR
FOUNDATION**

2023 SPECIAL REPORT
HUNTING



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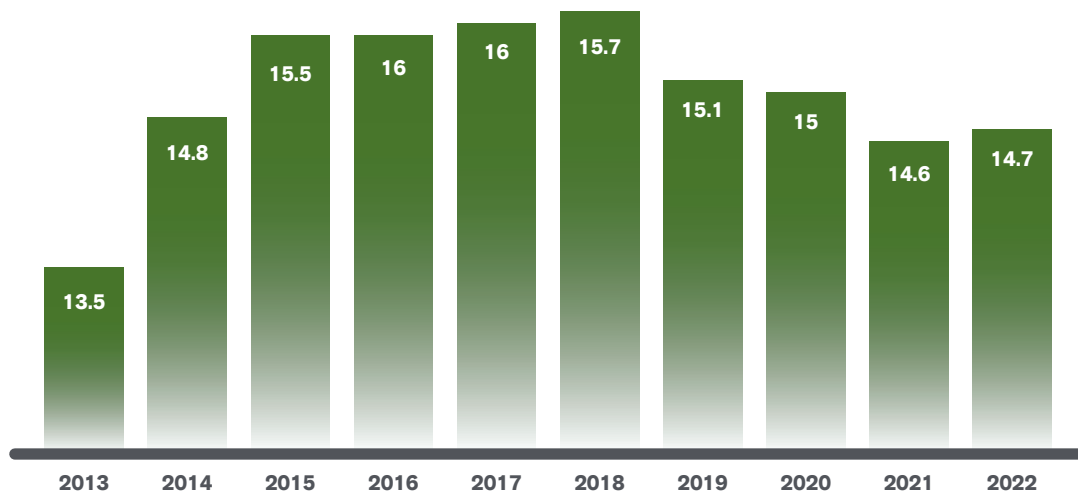
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Executive Summary

In 2022, 14.7 million Americans hunted at least one time with a bow or a firearm. Hunting participation increased 1% in 2022 compared to 2021. Bowhunting (archery) and hunting with a handgun increased, while hunting with a rifle and hunting with a shotgun remained even with 2021 numbers.

Hunting (Rifle/Shotgun/Handgun/Bow) 2013 to 2022
(millions of participants)



Note: This and all other graphs and statistics in this report are from the 2023 Physical Activity Council Overview Report on Participation.

Other measures of hunting sales and participation were mixed.

- Hunting-license sales dropped 3.1% in 2022, bringing license sales back down to 2019 pre-pandemic levels.¹
- Conversely, gun (anything that shoots a projectile) sales hit record levels in 2022, with 16.4 million background checks leading to 16.2 million firearm (a device designed to be used as a weapon where a projectile is expelled through a barrel by the force of an explosion or other form of combustion) sales.²
- Firearm sales peaked in 2020 at 20 million firearms sold. Many of those firearms were purchased primarily for self-defense, not for hunting.
- According to Pew Research, 38% of American gun owners plan to use their firearms for hunting.³

¹"COVID-19 and Hunting License Sales." Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports, April 3, 2021. <https://cahss.org/covid-19-and-hunting>

²National Shooting Sports Foundation – Report on the National Instant Criminal Background Check System 2022

³Pew Research, America's Complex Relationship with Guns, 2017. <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2017/06/22/americas-complex-relationship-with-guns/>



Overall Hunting Statistics

First we'll take a look at recent survey results about hunting in general; then we'll break it down into hunting with firearms vs. archery/bowhunting.

In terms of industry consumerism, in 2021 77% of hunters purchased gear or equipment.

How People Get Started in Hunting

Nearly 8 in 10 hunting participants (79%) were introduced to hunting by a family member, and over 6 in 10 (61%) were younger than 25 when they hunted for the first time.

Age when you started?	
6-17	43%
18-24	18%
25-34	18%
35-44	11%
45+	10%

Who introduced you to hunting?	
Parent	55%
Friend	14%
Grandparent	12%
Other family member	9%
Other	4%
Sibling	3%
Hunting or social club	3%

Motivations and Challenges

Harvesting food and meat remains a key inspiration to hunters, as do the desire to be close to nature and the challenge hunting provides. Limited access to quality hunting grounds and the high cost of ammunition were the most cited difficulties in 2022.

Who motivates you to hunt?	
For the food/meat	81%
To be close to nature	68%
For the challenge	58%
To be with family & friends	56%
For recreation	54%
For a trophy	17%
To protect farm animals	1%

What makes it difficult to hunt in your area?	
Poor access to places to hunt	39%
High cost of equipment/ammunition	38%
None	28%
Low quantity of game	25%
Complex hunting regulations	25%
High cost of a hunting license	24%

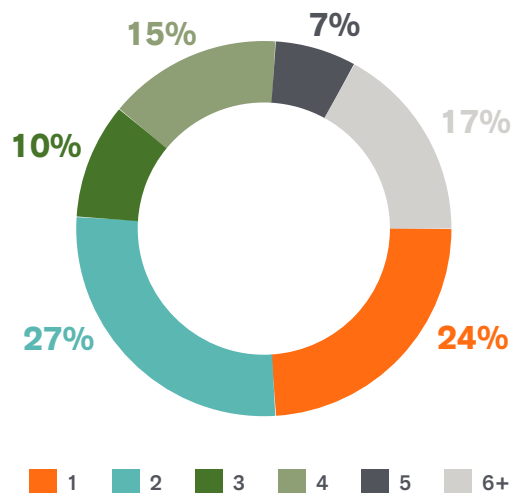


Profile of a Firearm Hunting Trip

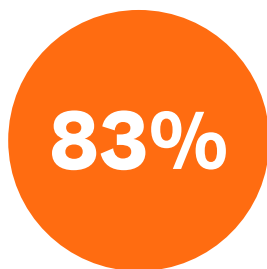
Nearly one in four hunters typically hunted alone in 2022. Just under half hunted in pairs, while another 26% preferred a group of three to five participants.

Nearly 40% of participants hunted in four or more states, which underscored hunting's geographic appeal and widespread economic impact. 49% hunted in three or more states in 2022. 31% hunted outside their home state.

In how many states did you hunt?



**Not necessarily a respondent's home state.*



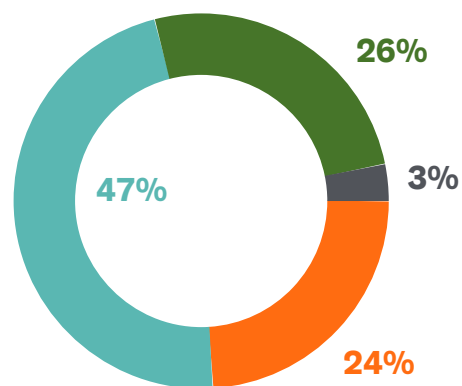
83% harvested game in 2022.

Cross Participation

Among those who hunted at least once in 2022 (including bow, handgun, rifle, and shotgun hunting) other popular activities included fishing, firearms target shooting, and camping.

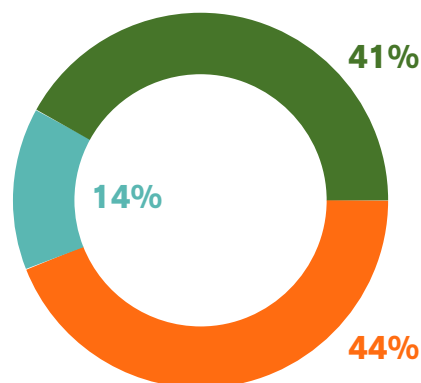
Fishing	74%
Firearm target shooting	65%
Camping	55%
Hiking	48%
Archery target shooting	36%
Bowling	34%
Running/jogging	34%
Basketball	28%
Golf	24%
Football	23%

How many typically in your group?



1 (just me) 2 3-5 6

Where did you hunt?



Private property Public property Both

What did you hunt?*

Deer	90%
Small game	53%
Turkey	48%
Upland bird	24%
Wild boar/pig	23%
Waterfowl	22%
Elk	19%
Bear	13%
Other	2%

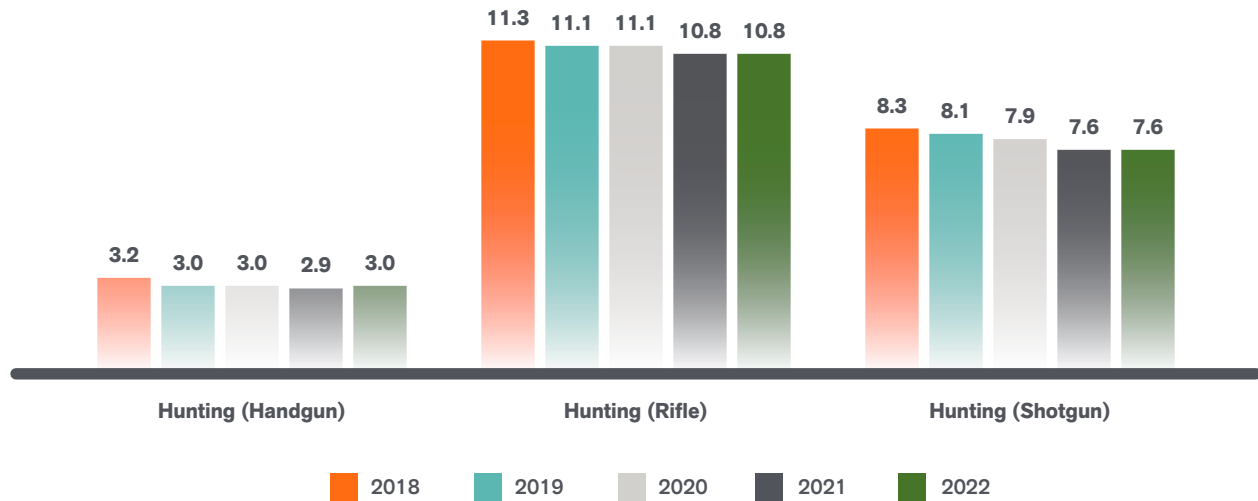
**Respondents could select multiple types of game.*

Firearms Hunting

Nearly 5% of the U.S. population aged 6 and over hunted with firearms in 2022. The number of participants increased by 1%, or 71,000 hunters, to 14.7 million hunters. Every category of firearm hunting participation increased or remained stable in 2022.

In terms of consumer consumption, 73% of firearm hunters purchased gear or equipment in 2022.

Hunting Participation by Firearm Type (Millions of Participants)



How People Get Started in Firearms Hunting

Two-thirds of firearms hunters—67%— were introduced to the sport before the age of 18. Only 13% took up hunting when 25 or older. A family member introduced 79% of firearm hunters to the sport.

Age when you started?	
6-17	67%
18-24	20%
25-34	9%
35-44	2%
45+	2%

Who introduced you to hunting?	
Parent	55%
Friend	14%
Grandparent	12%
Other family member	9%
Other	5%
Sibling	3%
Hunting or social club	3%



Firearms Hunting Motivations and Challenges

As with archery hunting, harvesting food, and being close to nature were top motivations for firearms hunters in 2022. High costs and poor access topped the list of reported challenges, though one-third of hunters reported no difficulties in their area.

Who motivates you to hunt?	
For the food/meat	82%
To be close to nature	68%
For the challenge	58%
To be with family & friends	57%
For recreation	54%
For a trophy	17%

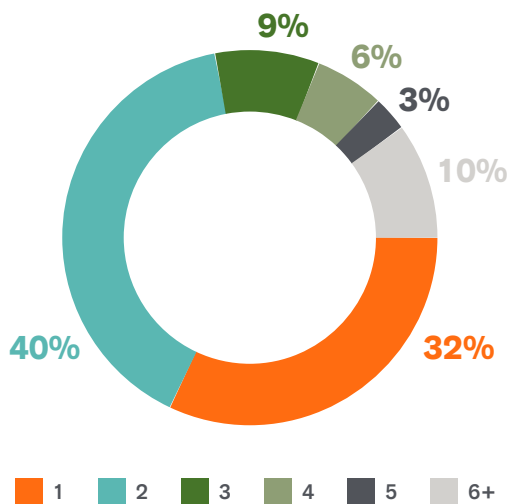
What makes it difficult to hunt in your area?	
Poor access to places to hunt	38%
High cost of equipment/ammunition	38%
High cost of a hunting license	24%
No difficulties in my area	29%
Low quantity of game	25%
Complex hunting regulations	24%

Profile of a Hunting Trip

Only 17% of firearm hunters reported that they typically hunted alone in 2022. Almost half reported they generally had one companion, with another 31% indicating they hunted in groups of three to five.

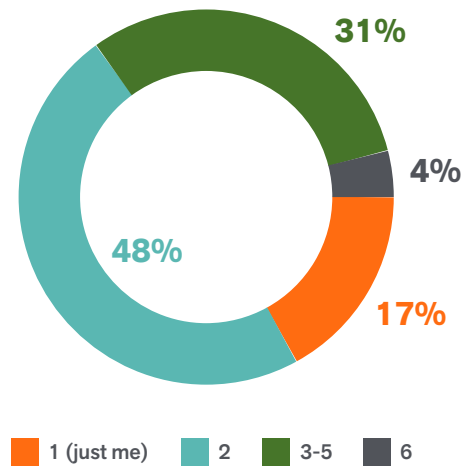
About 3 in 10 firearms hunters reported hunting in only one state in 2022. About one in three reported hunting in three or more states, and 28% hunted outside their home state.

In how many states did you hunt?

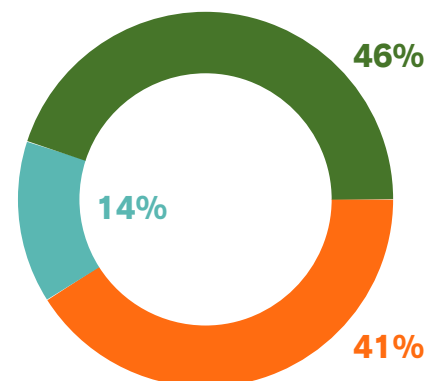


**Not necessarily a respondent's home state.*

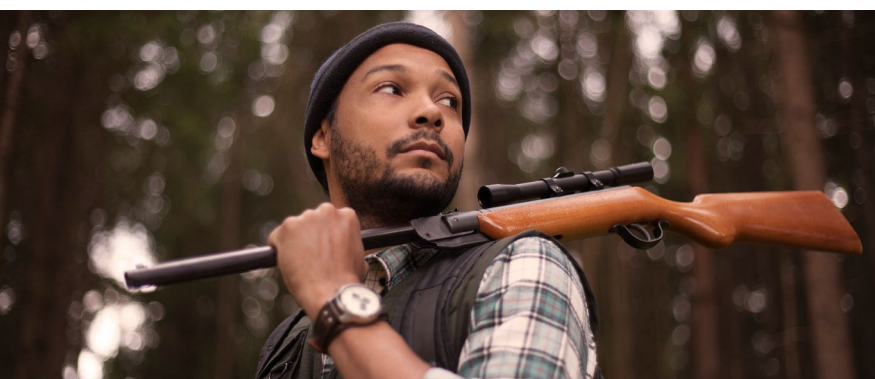
How many typically in your group?



Where did you hunt?



Private property Public property Both





**harvested
game in 2022.**

Frequency of Participation

Hunting frequency is divided into *casual* and *core* based on the distribution of frequency across the category.

- In the rifle-hunting category, hunters who hunt eight or more days in the calendar year are considered “core” hunters. In 2022, just 21% of rifle hunters met this definition. The number of core rifle hunters has been in slow decline for the past decade.
- Core shotgun hunters are defined as having hunted 13 times or more in the calendar year. Despite the higher number of hunting days to be considered a “core” shotgun hunter, 39% qualify.
- Nearly 30% of handgun hunters participated for at least eight days to be considered core handgun hunters. Handgun hunting frequency of participation is higher than rifle hunting but is following the same slow decrease in frequency across the participation base.

Cross-participation

Fishing, target shooting with firearms, and camping topped the list of popular activities among firearms hunters in 2022.

Fishing	80%
Firearm target shooting	59%
Camping	58%
Hiking	48%
Archery hunting	45%
Archery target shooting	32%
Bowling	32%
Running/jogging	31%

What did you hunt?*	
Deer	85%
Small game	49%
Turkey	43%
Upland bird	23%
Waterfowl	21%
Wild Boar/pig	20%
Elk	16%
Bear	12%
Moose	1%

**Respondents could select multiple types of game.*



Firearms Demographics

Our participant statistics are broken down by gender, ethnicity/race, income, age, geography, and education.

Frequency of Participation

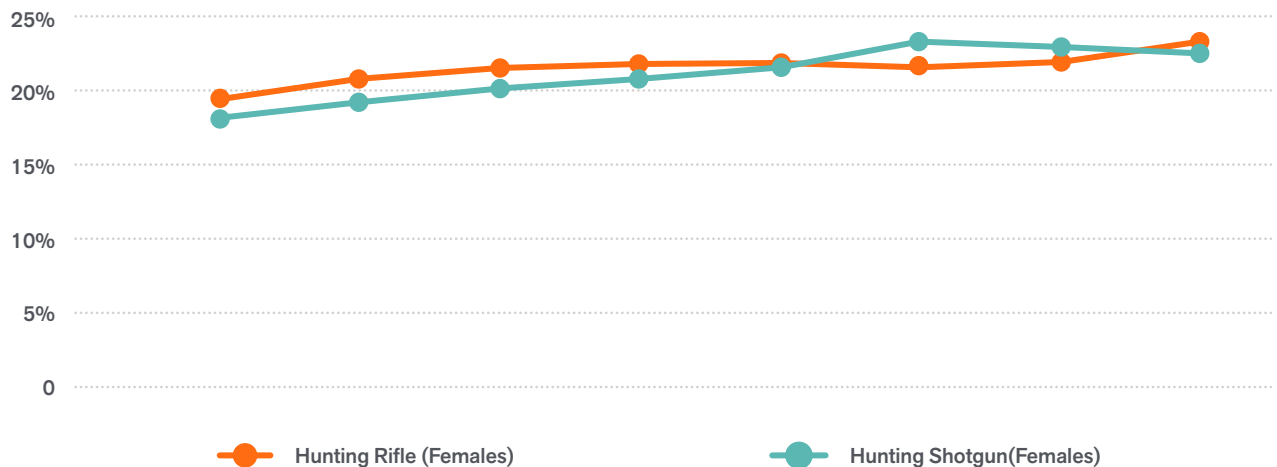
Hunting frequency is divided into casual and core categories based on the distribution of frequency across the category.

- In the rifle hunting category, hunters who hunt eight or more days in the calendar year are considered core hunters. In 2022, just 21% of rifle hunters hunted frequently enough to be considered core hunters. The number of core rifle hunters has been in slow decline for the past decade.
- Shotgun hunters must hunt 13 times or more in the calendar year to be considered core shotgun hunters. However, despite the higher number of hunting days to be considered a core shotgun hunter, 39% qualify.
- Handgun hunters who participate for at least eight days are considered core handgun hunters, and nearly one in three qualify. Handgun hunting frequency of participation is higher than rifle hunting but is following the same slow decrease in frequency across the participation base.

Firearms Hunting Participation by Gender

Of all firearms hunters in 2022, 23% were female. The share of females hunting has increased steadily over the past decade. In 2015, just 19% of hunters using rifles and 18.1% of hunters using shotguns were female. The steady progress of female participation is likely to continue.

Hunting (by Females) with Rifles and Shotguns as a Percentage of Participation 2015 to 2022

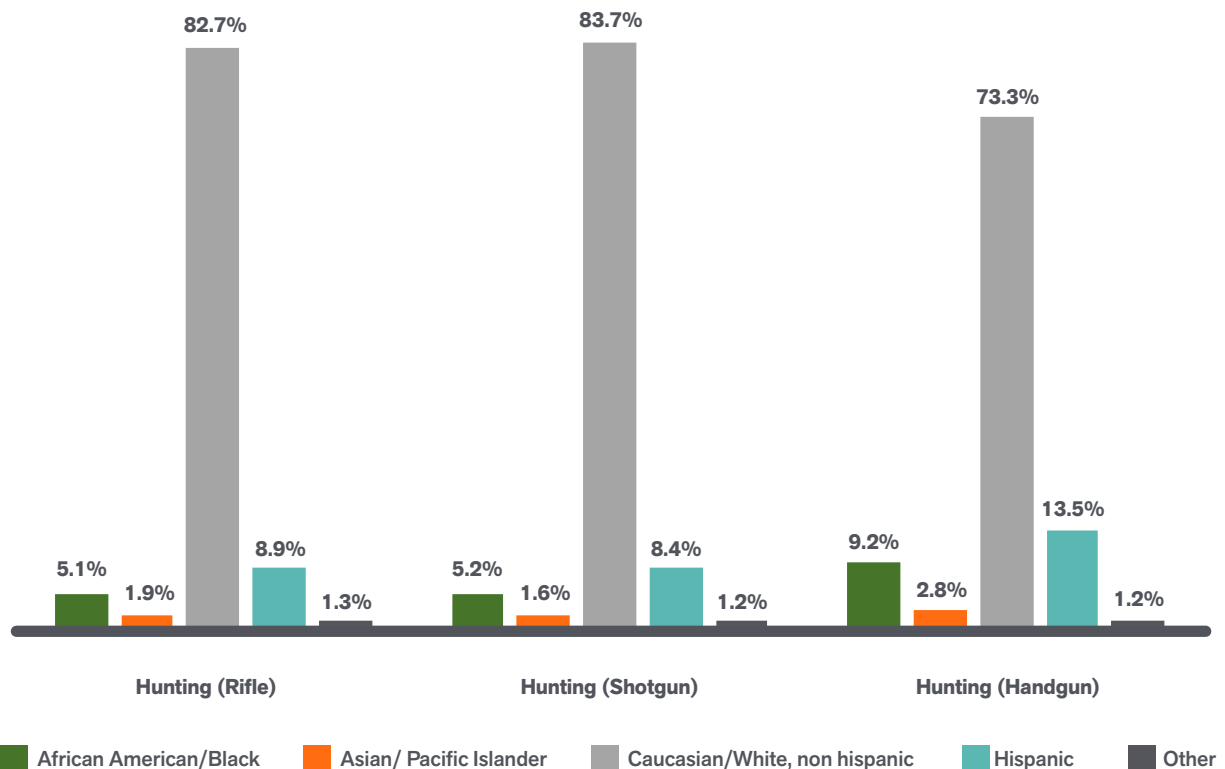


**Only two options for gender were provided in this survey. We recognize that there are myriad gender identifications and that that is a limit of this data.*

Firearms Hunting Participation by Race/Ethnicity

The share of Blacks and Hispanics among participants increased by an average of 5% and 2%, respectively, for each of the last three years.

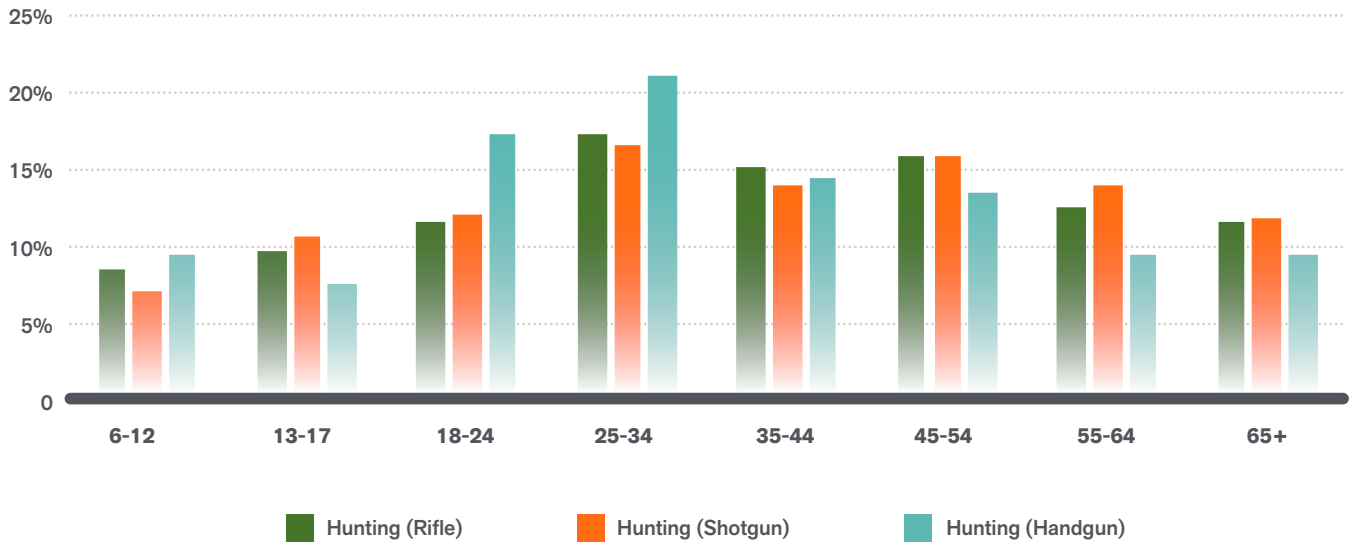
Ethnicity/Race Demographic for Firearm Hunting (Rifle, Shotgun, and Handgun)



Firearm Hunting Participation by Age

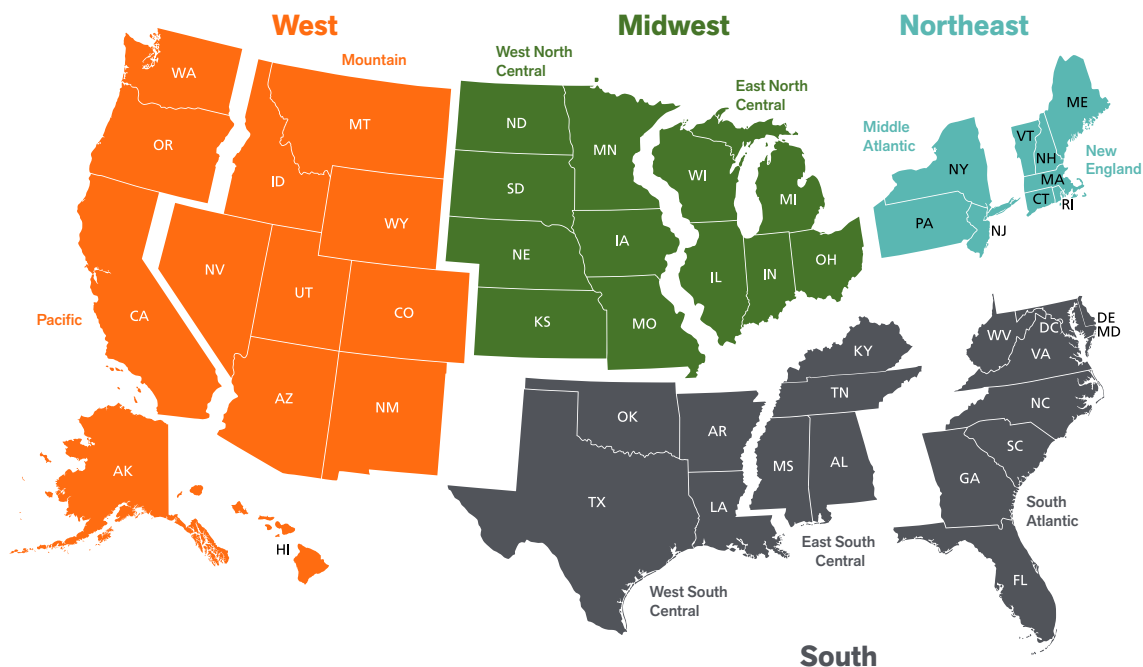
Hunting with firearms has a remarkably normal distribution of participants by age, particularly hunting with rifles and shotguns. Participation appears to peak in the 25-to-34 age group in all firearm categories. Note that more than 10% of hunters are 65 or older.

Firearm Hunting by Participant Age Group

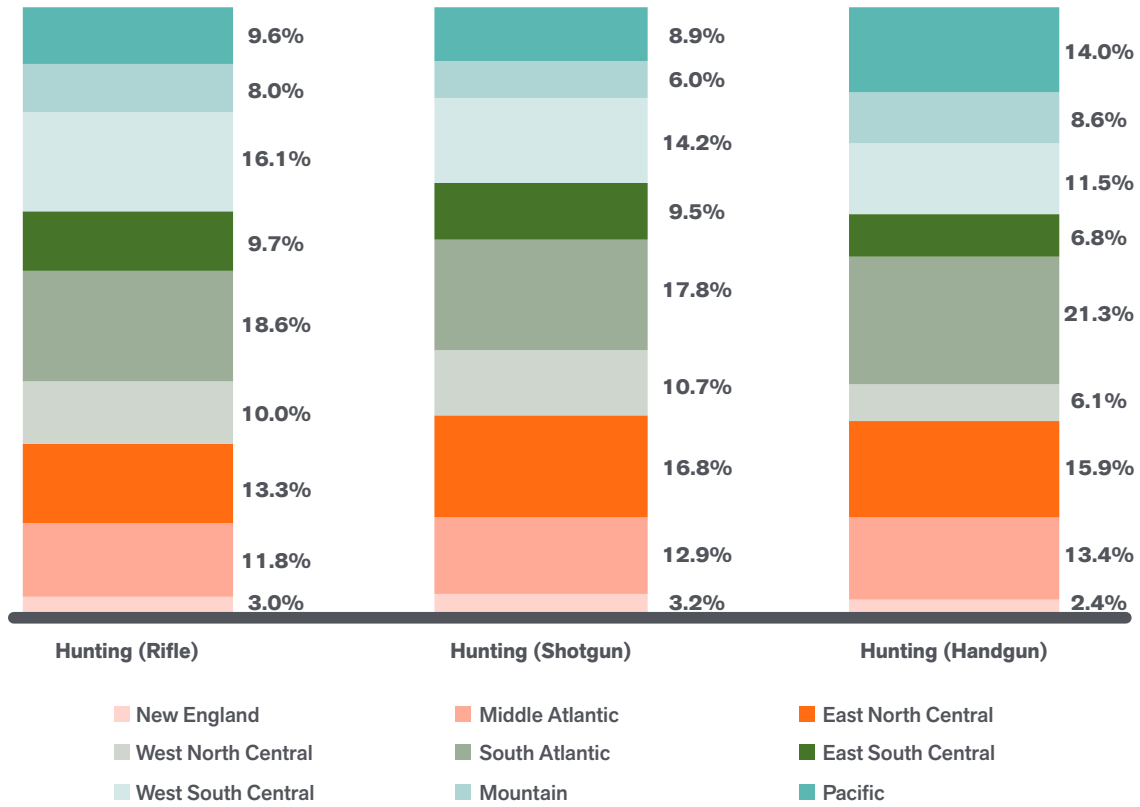


Firearms Hunting Participation by Geographic Region

- The South Atlantic region is ranked first in number of hunters who reside in the region.
- The East North Central region, home of the Great Lakes, has the second-highest number of hunters in the U.S.
- Although made up of just three states (NY, PA, NJ), the Middle Atlantic region is home to about 12% of all firearm hunters in the U.S.
- Although the Mountain region contains the most land of any region, it's home to just 7% of all firearm hunters despite the vast area it covers.
- The Pacific West (which includes Alaska) is more than 90% public land and is home to about 8% of America's firearm hunters.
- The northeastern U.S. has the fewest hunters with less than 3% of all hunters in the U.S.



Firearm Hunting by Region 2022

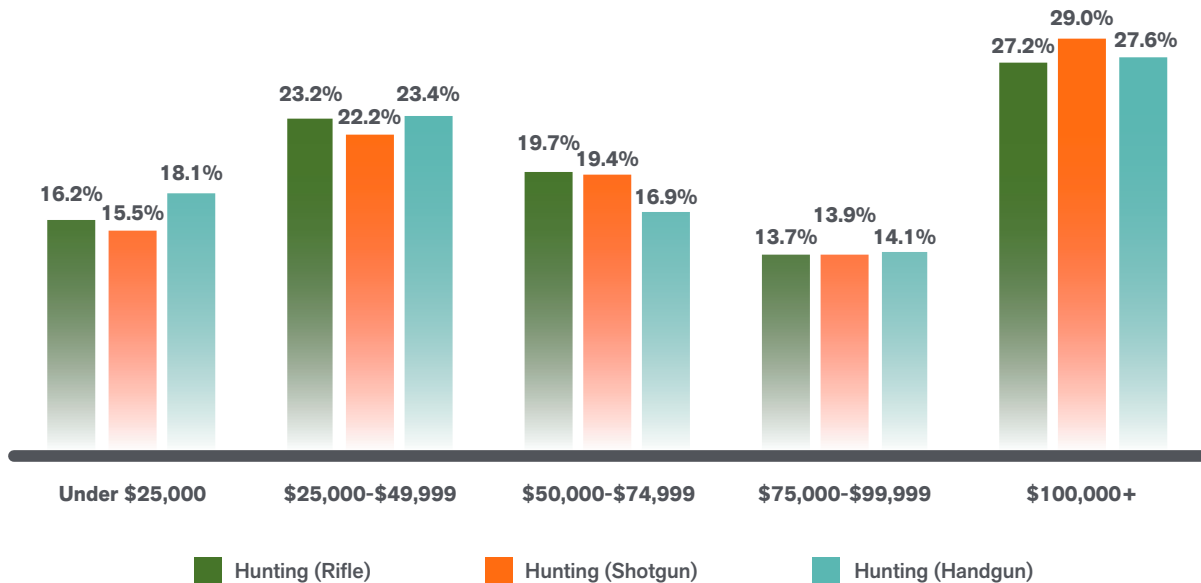


Firearms Hunting Participation by Income Level

Hunting participants are most likely to be on one end of the income distribution or the other with fewer in the middle-income groups.

- About 40% of firearms hunters live in households with \$50,000 or less in annual income.
- Nearly one-third live in households with \$100,000 in annual household income or more.
- That leaves little room in the middle-income groups with household income from \$50,001 to \$99,000; people in those income groups make up about 20% of the hunting participant base.

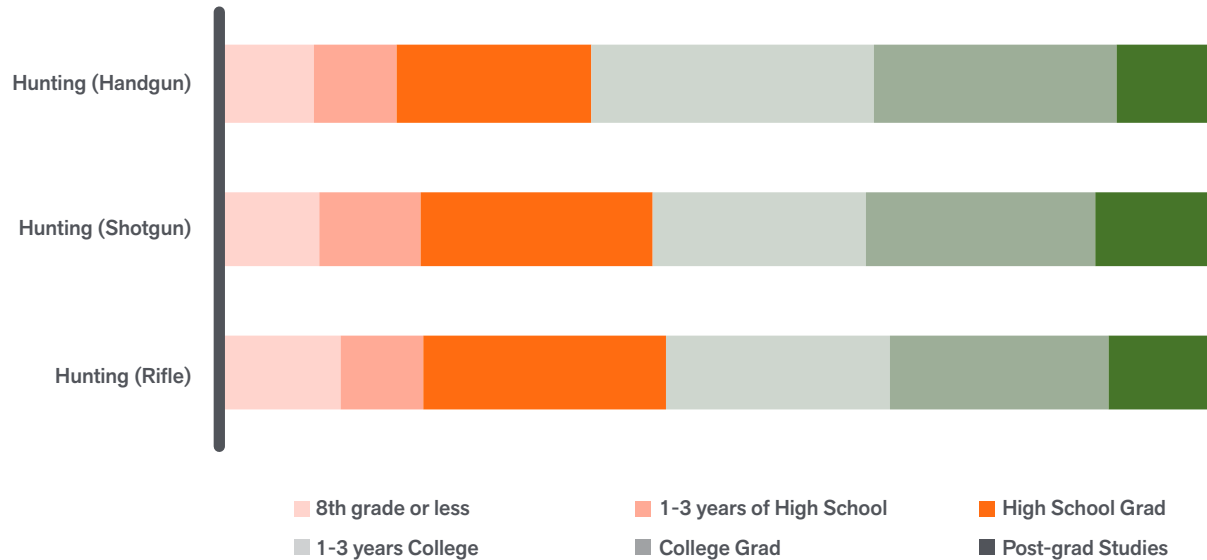
Firearms Hunting Participants by Income Level 2022



Firearms Hunting Participants by Education Level

Hunters tend to be well-educated. One in three hunters has at least a bachelor's degree and more than 10% have professional or graduate degrees. Considering that 15% of hunters are under 17, the percentage of participants with less than a high school diploma is very low, at about 20% overall.

Firearms Hunting Participants by Education Level 2022



Future Firearms Hunting Participation

When asked if they planned to participate in firearms hunting in the coming 12 months, only 2% of hunters said no or were unsure. An impressive 28% said they wanted to hunt over 21 times compared to 24% who said the same in 2021. Another 38% anticipated 8 to 20 outings, up from 34% in 2021.

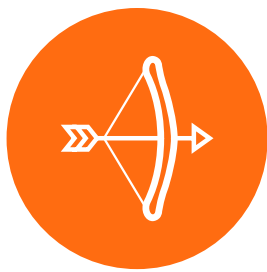
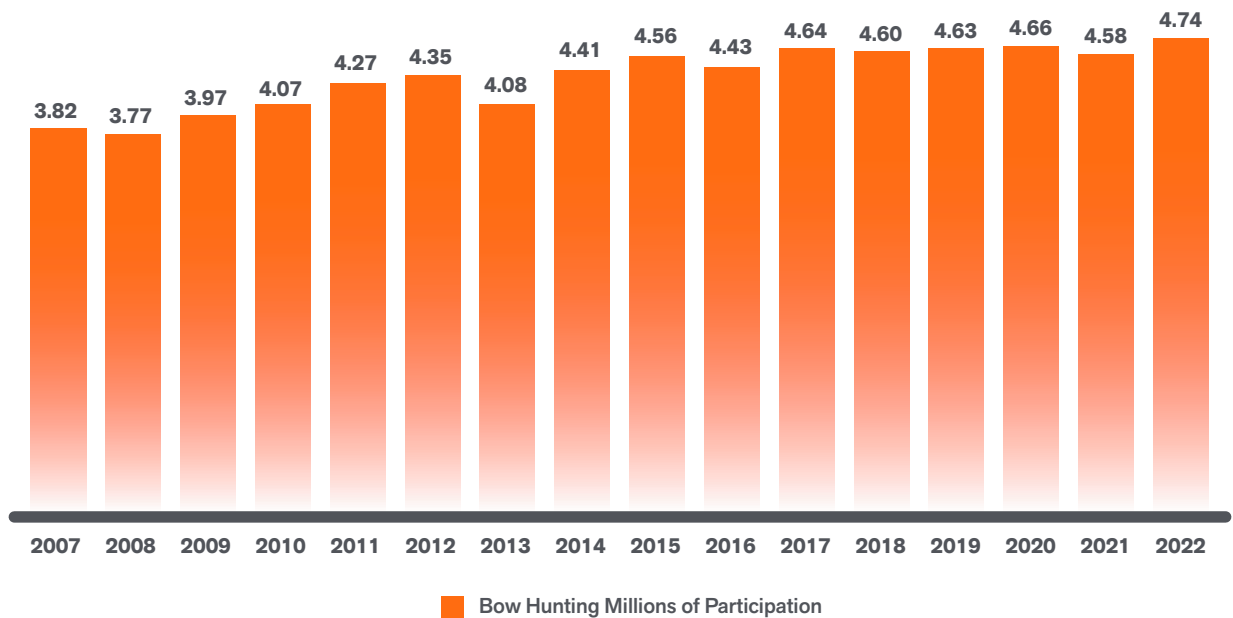
Will you participate in the next 12 months?	
Yes, 21+ times	28%
Yes, 8-20 times	38%
Yes, 1-8 times	33%
No or not sure	2%



Archery/Bowhunting

Bowhunting has been inching up in participant numbers for the past 15 years. The participation rate—the percentage of bowhunters in the population—has wavered between 1.5% and 1.6% for the past five years. This includes 2020 and 2021, when the pandemic drove the outdoor recreation participation rate up to 55.1%. That means 55.1% participated in at least one category of outdoor recreation.

Hunting (Bow) Participation 2007 to 2022



Of archery participants, 76% purchased gear or equipment in 2022.

How People Get Started in Bowhunting

As with all activities measured in this report, families remain key to participation growth. In 2022, 72% of archery hunters were introduced to the sport by a family member. Archery hunters were somewhat less likely than firearms hunters to have first hunted as children—60% started before age 18 versus 67% of firearms hunters. Altogether, 78% began bowhunting before the age of 25.

Age when you started?	
6-17	54%
18-24	24%
25-34	13%
35-44	4%
45+	6%

Who introduced you to hunting?	
Parents	50%
Friends	16%
Grandparents	12%
Other family member	7%
Other	6%
Hunting or social club	6%
Sibling	3%

Bowhunting Motivations and Challenges

As with firearms hunting, seeking food and wanting to be close to nature were the top motivations for archery hunting in 2022. Poor access and high costs were the biggest impediments for archery hunters.

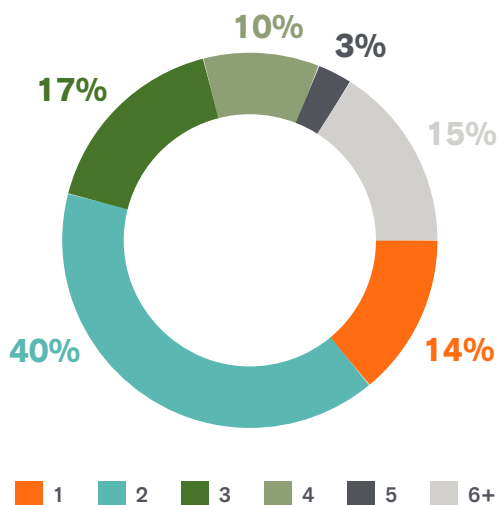
Who motivates you to hunt?	
For the food/meat	81%
To be close to nature	73%
For the challenge	63%
For recreation	58%
To be with family & friends	57%
For a trophy	23%

What makes it difficult to hunt in your area?	
Poor access to places to hunt	44%
High cost of equipment/ammunition	42%
Complex hunting regulations	33%
Low quantity of game	32%
High cost of a hunting license	30%
None	21%

Profile of a Bowhunting Trip

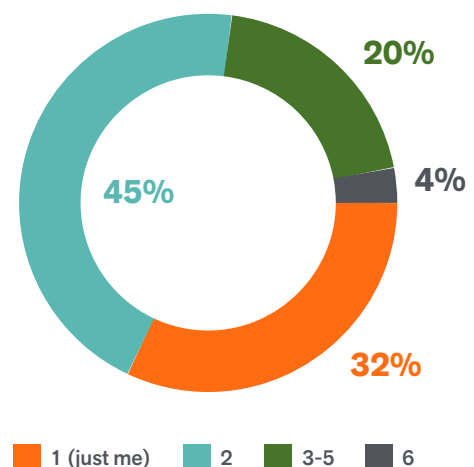
About one in three archery hunters typically hunted alone while just under half had one companion.

In how many states did you hunt?

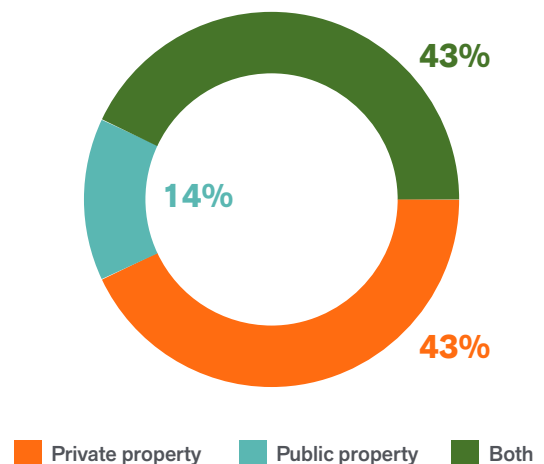


*Not necessarily a respondent's home state.

How many typically in your group?



Where did you hunt?



Bowhunters were as likely as firearms hunters to hunt in more than one state.





80%

**harvested
game in 2022.**

What did you hunt?*	
Deer	84%
Turkey	39%
Small game	34%
Elk	20%
Wild boar/pig	18%
Upland bird	14%
Bear	12%
Waterfowl	10%

*Respondents could select multiple types of game.

Type of bow used?*

*Respondents could select multiple types

66%
compound bow

37%
crossbow

34%
traditional bow

Frequency of Bowhunting

To be considered a core bowhunter, participants must participate in bowhunting for eight or more days in the calendar year. In 2022, 35.8% of bowhunters hunted frequently enough to be considered core participants. Although the number of bowhunters has steadily increased, the percentage of core bowhunters has decreased from 2 million in 2015 to less than 1.7 million in 2022.

Frequency is highly correlated with spending in the category. Working to increase the frequency of hunting among new bowhunters will help boost sales of bowhunting hard goods, accessories, and apparel.

Bowhunting Cross Participation

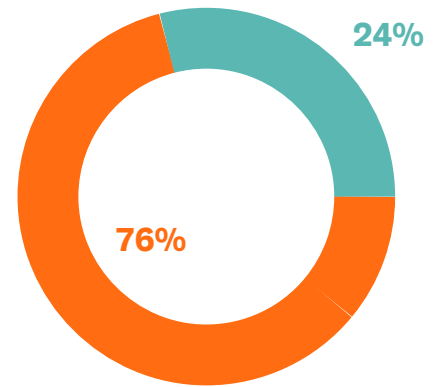
Hunting with firearms and archery target shooting were among the most popular activities with bowhunters in 2022. Fishing, camping, and hiking topped the list of non-shooting activities.

Hunting with firearms	91%
Fishing	77%
Archery target shooting	65%
Firearms target shooting	65%
Camping	63%
Hiking	53%
Bowling	39%
Running/jogging	37%





Bowhunting by Gender 2022



Male Female

**Only two options for gender were provided in this survey. We recognize that there are myriad gender identifications and that that is a limit of this data.*

Bowhunting Demographics

Our statistics are broken down by gender, ethnicity/race, geography, income, and education.

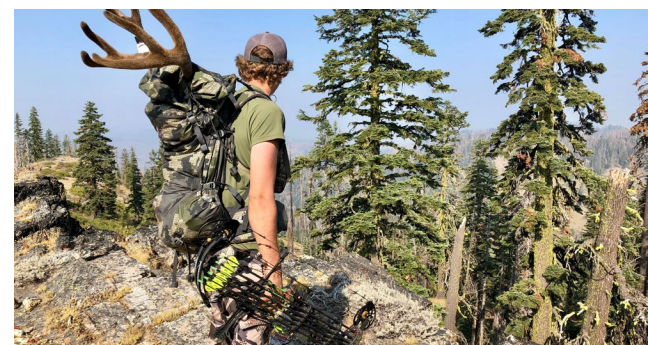
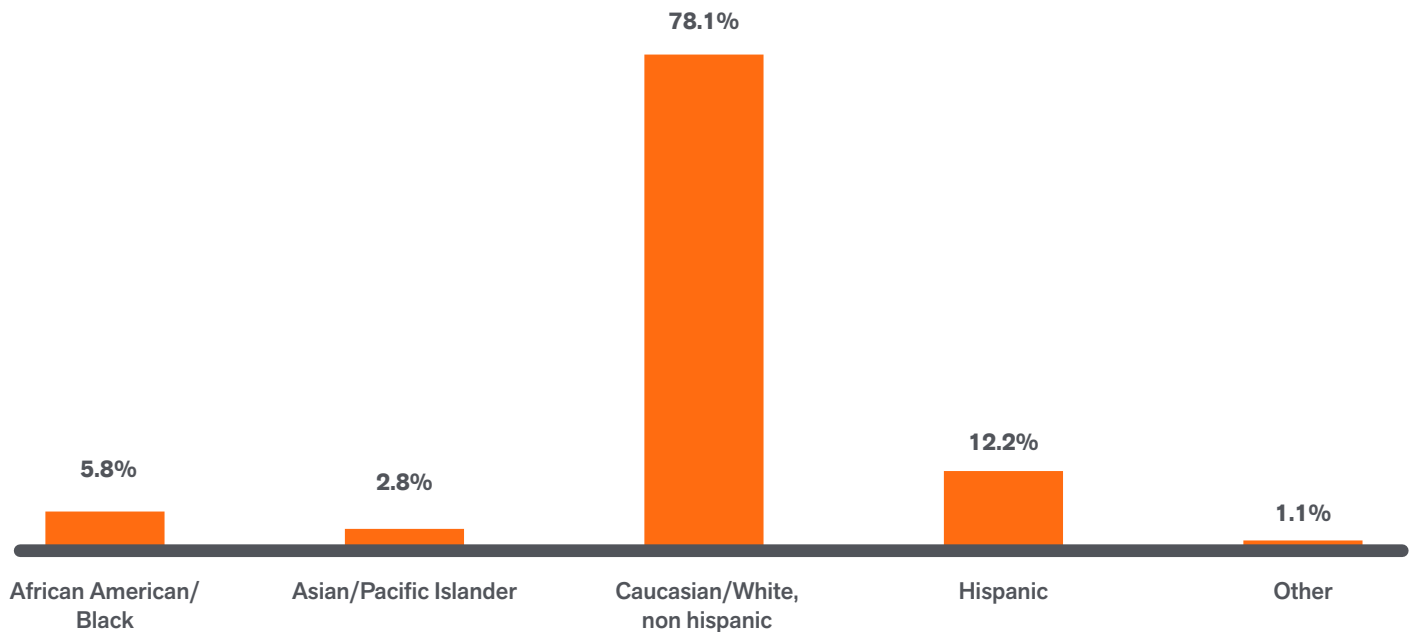
Bowhunting by Gender

The increase in archery participation among females (related to the popularity of the Hunger Games book and movie series) has not translated into bowhunting. In 2022, 24%, or 1.1 million women, hunted with a bow.

Bowhunting by Ethnicity/Race

Bowhunters are most likely to be white as well as male. However, the percentage of Hispanic people participating in bowhunting is on the rise, from 9.7% in 2015 to 12.2% in 2022.

Bowhunting by Ethnicity/Race of Participants 2022



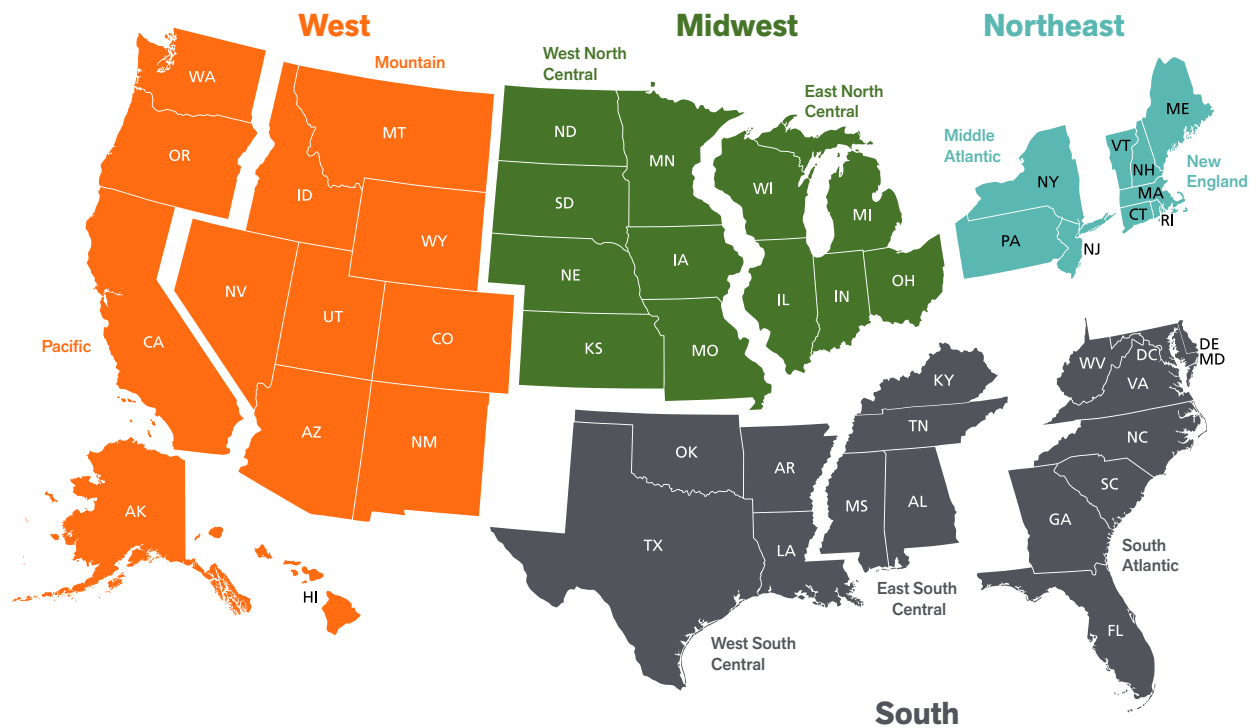
Bow Hunting By Age Group

Bow hunters are concentrated on each side of the income spectrum. About 30% of bow hunters live in households with an annual income of \$100,000, and 40% have household incomes below \$50,000.

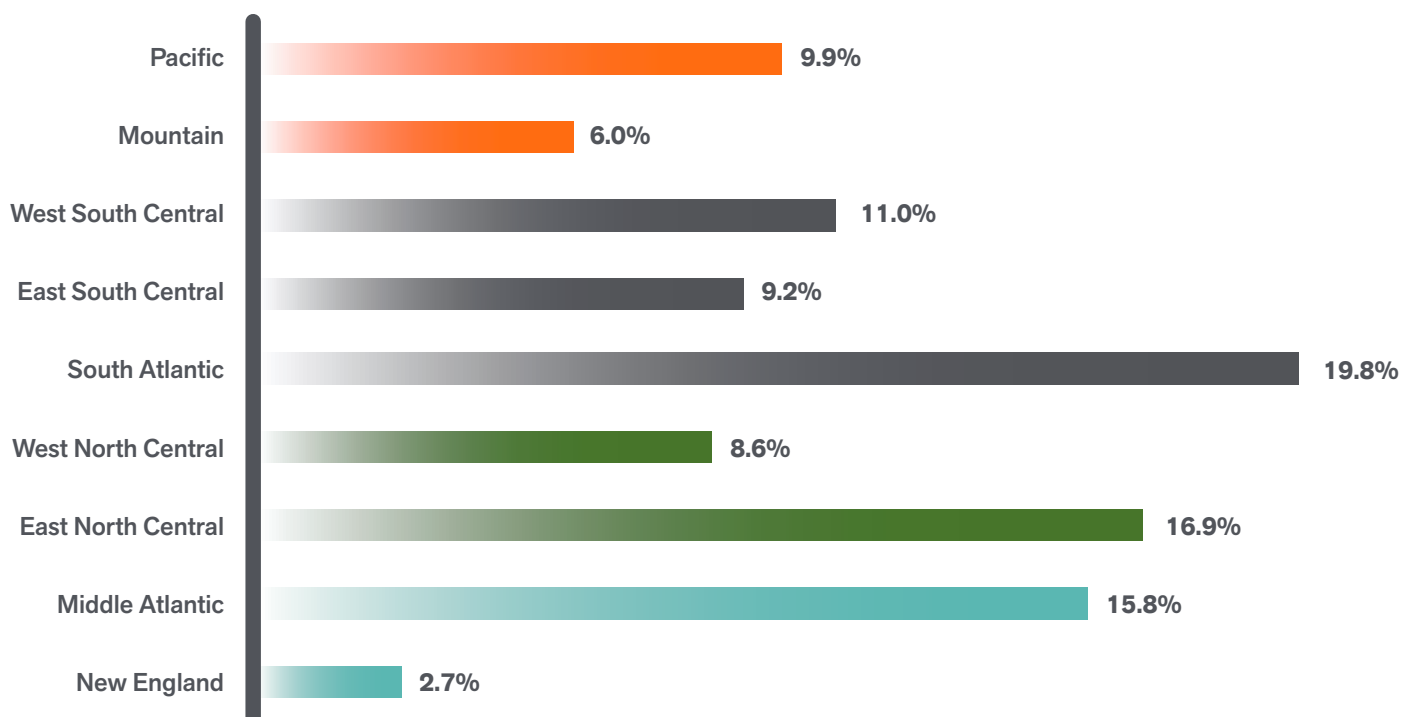
Bowhunting Participation by Geographic Region

Bowhunters are well-dispersed across the U.S. (Note that this data shows where participants reside, not where they hunt.)

- The South Atlantic region, which includes WV and all Atlantic coastal states from MD to FL, is home to one in every five bowhunters.
- The Great Lakes region is home to the second most bowhunters; 16.9% reside in the East North Central region.



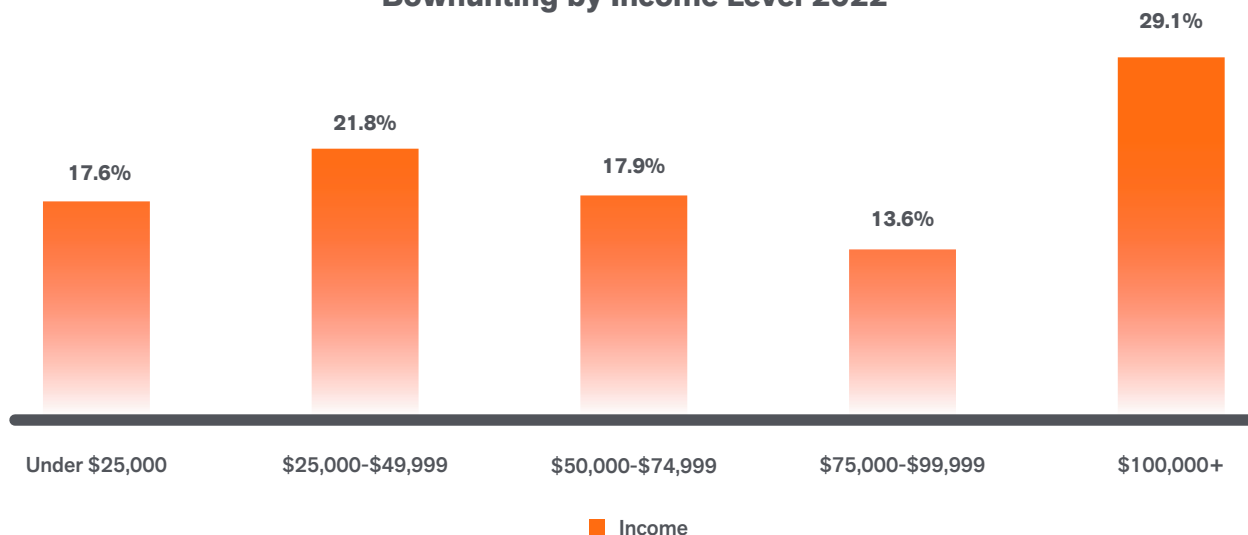
Bowhunting by Geographic Region 2022



Bowhunting Participant Base by Income Level

Like firearms hunters, bowhunters tend to be at one end of the income distribution or the other. About 40% of bowhunters live in households with less than \$50,000 in annual income, and 30% live in households with an income of \$100,000 or more.

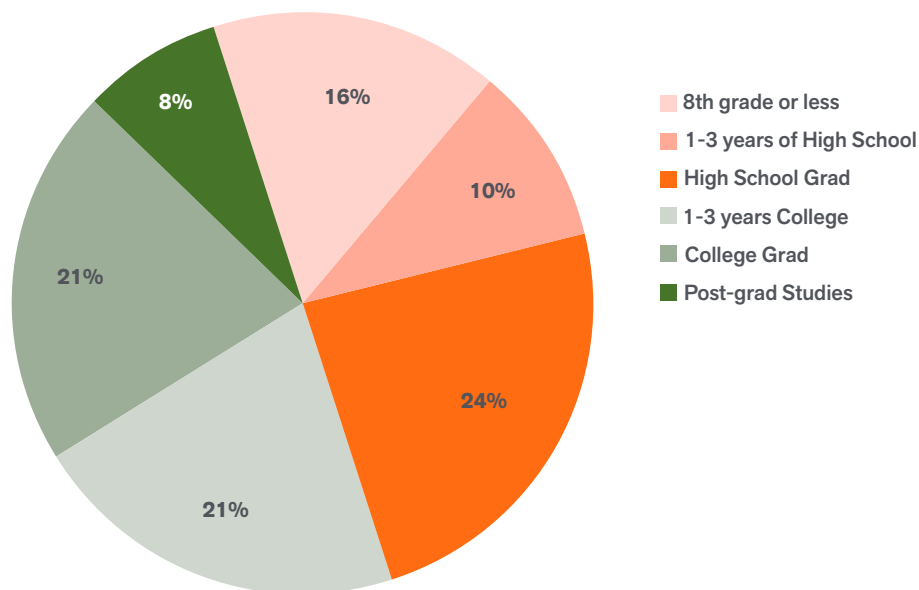
Bowhunting by Income Level 2022



Bowhunting by Education Level

Sometimes a simple look at data can be misleading. The chart below shows that 26% of bowhunters have not graduated from high school—a trend that makes more sense when considering the statistic that 23% of bowhunters are aged 6 to 17 years.

Bowhunting Participants by Education Level 2022



Future Participation

Only 1 in 50 bowhunters said they did not plan to participate in the coming 12 months. Nearly 4 in 10 expected to hunt more than 21 times, while another 33% anticipated 8 to 20 outings.

Will you participate in the next 12 months?	
Yes, 21+ times	38%
Yes, 8-20 times	33%
Yes, 1-8 times	26%
No or not sure	2%

Methodology for 2022 Participation Data

All participation statistics are from a nationwide study conducted during the 2022 calendar year by Sports Marketing Surveys USA (SMS). Under the guidance of the Sports and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) and seven other sports industry associations that make up the Physical Activity Council (PAC), the participation study was designed and launched by Digital Research (DRI). All other data is attributable to the SFIA/SMS research partnership.

Sample Specification

During 2022, a total of 18,000 online interviews were carried out with a nationwide sample of individuals from U.S. proprietary online panels representative of the U.S. population for people ages six and older. Strict quotas associated with gender, age, income, region, and ethnicity were followed to ensure a balanced sample.

The 2022 participation survey sample size of 18,000 completed interviews provides a high degree of statistical accuracy. All surveys are subject to some level of standard error—that is, the degree to which the results might differ from those obtained by a complete census of every person in the U.S. A sport with a participation rate of 5% has a confidence interval of plus or minus 0.32 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

A weighting technique was used to balance the data to reflect the total U.S. population ages six and above. The following variables were used: gender, age, income, ethnicity, household size, region, and population density. The total population figure used was 304,745,039 people aged 6 and older.

In May of 2023, a total of 800 online interviews were collected on hunting and target-shooting participation. Results from these in-depth interviews provide nationally representative data on hunting and target shooting participation among Americans 18 and over and can be projected to produce national numbers.

Activity reporting is based on a rolling 12-month participation rate. All charts represent data from U.S. populations ages 6 and over unless otherwise specified. If you have specific questions regarding the methodology, please contact Sports Marketing Surveys at info@sportsmarketingsurveysusa.com.

Youth Interviews

All interviews with children under 13 were carried out following the guidelines set out in the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA). No children were contacted directly. The panel is a balanced sample of households with children in each age group, but contact is always made through designated adult panelists. The adult panelist receives the survey invitation on behalf of a specified child aged six to 12, and they are asked to complete the survey together. Respondents ages 13 to 17 are contacted in a manner similar to respondents ages 6 to 12, but they are asked to complete the survey themselves.

About the Physical Activity Council (PAC)

The survey that forms the basis of the 2022 Special Report on Hunting & the Shooting Sports is produced by the Physical Activity Council (PAC), which is a partnership of leading organizations in the U.S. sports, fitness, and leisure industries. While the overall aim of the survey is to establish levels of activity and identify key trends in sports, fitness, and recreation participation, each partner produces detailed reports on specific areas of interest. Partners include Outdoor Foundation (OF); National Golf Foundation (NGF); Snowsports Industries America (SIA); Tennis Industry Association (TIA); USA Football; United States Tennis Association (USTA), International Health and Racquet and Sportsclub Association (IHRSA); and Sport and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA).

Notes

OIA supports responsible and ethical hunting practices.

Unless otherwise noted, the data in this report was collected during the 2022 participation survey, which focused on American participation in the 2022 calendar year. Please note that some information includes data that was collected during previous surveys, as some questions are not asked every year.



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