

# Texas Hunting Accident Report 2023



**TEXAS**  
**PARKS &**  
**WILDLIFE**

# TEXAS HUNTING ACCIDENT DATA (1966-2023)

## \* *Voluntary* \* Hunter Education Program 1972-1987

Calendar Year	Fatalities	Non-Fatal	Accidents	Hunting Licenses Sold	Accidents/ 100,000 Licenses	Fatalities/ 100,000 Licenses	Students Certified
1966	28	53	81	644,653	12.6	4.3	-
1967	23	70	93	797,846	11.7	2.9	-
1968	37	68	105	854,693	12.3	4.3	-
1969	24	68	92	895,593	10.3	2.7	-
1970	19	53	72	935,793	7.7	2.0	-
1971	24	68	92	978,285	9.4	2.5	-
1972	30	55	85	966,332	8.8	3.1	2,119
1973	22	58	80	1,011,963	7.9	2.2	4,314
1974	16	52	68	1,037,925	6.6	1.5	6,094
1975	11	66	77	1,051,834	7.3	1.0	8,531
1976	11	52	63	1,050,349	6	1.0	10,043
1977	17	64	81	1,080,530	7.5	1.6	11,298
1978	20	63	83	1,091,794	7.6	1.8	10,890
1979	10	43	53	1,093,716	4.8	0.9	10,775
1980	13	56	69	1,160,375	5.9	1.1	12,166
1981	19	53	72	1,174,023	6.1	1.6	13,187
1982	23	74	97	1,216,032	8.0	1.9	13,323
1983	17	63	80	1,325,474	6.0	1.3	14,131
1984	21	39	60	1,140,174	5.3	1.8	13,052
1985	15	57	72	1,100,991	6.5	1.4	11,284
1986	13	55	68	1,162,785	5.8	1.1	11,195
1987	12	69	81	1,189,566	6.8	1.0	8,611
<b>Voluntary</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>1299</b>	<b>1724</b>	<b>22,960,726</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>1.85</b>	<b>161,013</b>

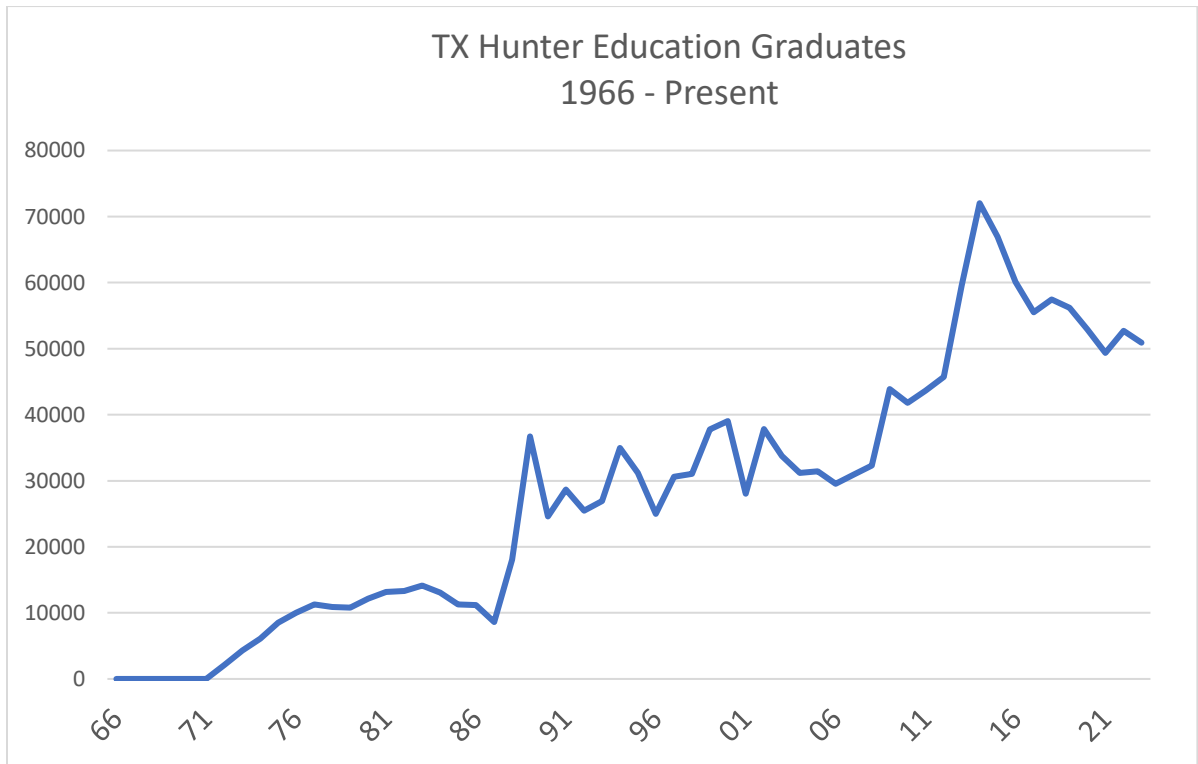
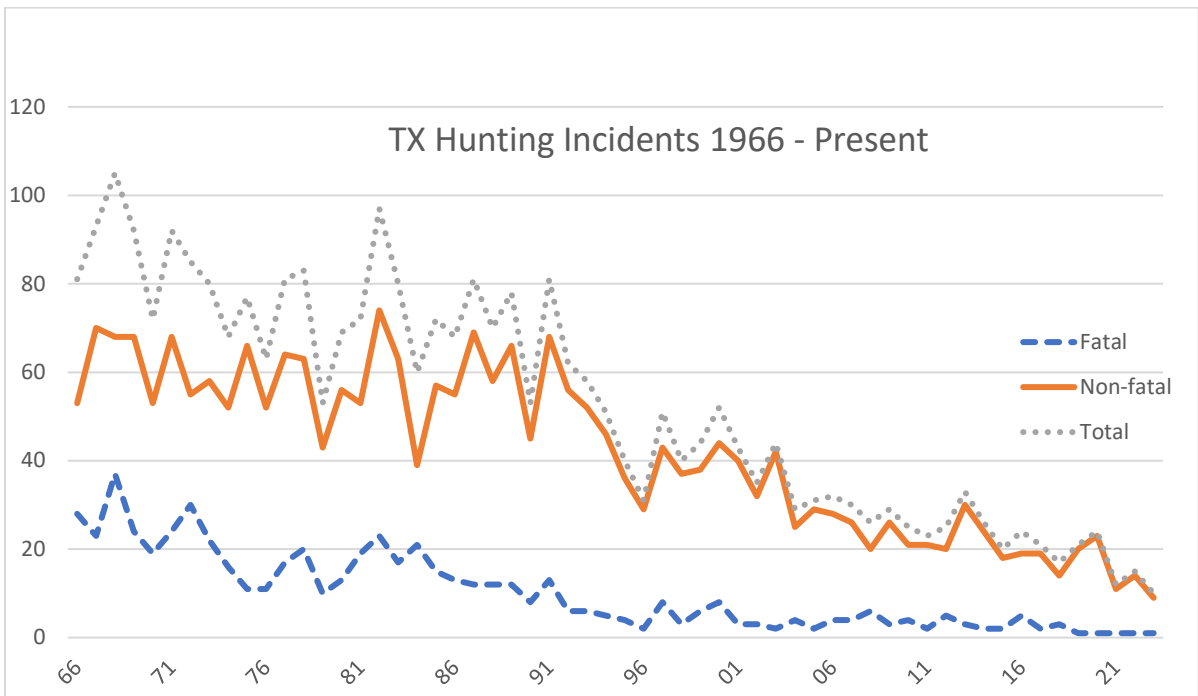


## \* *Mandatory* \* Hunter Education Program 1988 - Present

Calendar Year	Fatal	Non-Fatal	Accidents	Hunting Licenses Sold	Accidents/ 100,000 Licenses	Fatalities/ 100,000 Licenses	Students Certified	Deferrals Sold
1988	12	58	70	1,189,000	5.9	1.0	18,043	-
1989	12	66	78	1,193,000	6.5	1.0	36,708	-
1990	8	45	53	1,132,917	4.7	0.7	24,590	-
1991	13	68	81	1,103,903	7.3	1.2	28,682	-
1992	6	56	62	1,053,063	5.9	0.6	25,453	-
1993	6	52	58	1,077,055	5.4	0.6	26,942	-
1994	5	46	51	1,083,227	4.7	0.5	34,972	-
1995	4	36	40	1,060,000	3.8	0.4	31,215	-
1996	2	29	31	990,000	3.1	0.2	24,998	-
1997	8	43	51	960,000	5.3	0.8	30,625	-
1998	3	37	40	1,011,500	3.9	0.3	31,052	-
1999	6	38	44	1,010,455	4.3	0.6	37,775	-
2000	8	44	52	1,145,000	4.5	0.7	39,049	-
2001	3	40	43	1,076,159	4.0	0.3	28,062	-
2002	3	32	35	1,024,495	3.4	0.3	37,847	-
2003	2	42	44	1,082,225	4.1	0.2	33,769	-
2004	4	25	29	1,091,178	2.7	0.4	31,171	-
2005	2	29	31	1,082,593	2.9	0.2	31,442	-
2006	4	28	32	1,115,772	2.9	0.4	29,532	-
2007	4	26	30	1,112,099	2.7	0.4	30,960	-
2008	6	20	26	993,533	2.6	0.6	32,308	-
2009	3	26	29	1,011,936	2.9	0.3	43,880	12,545
2010	4	21	25	1,141,924	2.2	0.4	41,785	13,997
2011	2	21	23	1,165,248	2.0	0.2	43,645	15,101
2012	5	20	25	1,155,542	2.2	0.4	45,719	15,438
2013	3	30	33	1,227,025	2.7	0.2	59,597	17,257
2014	2	24	26	1,284,933	2.0	0.2	72,026	11,898
2015	2	18	20	1,259,259	1.6	0.2	66,961	14,025
2016	5	19	24	1,271,368	1.9	0.4	60,115	14,371
2017	2	19	21	1,248,450	1.7	0.2	55,507	12,113
2018	3	14	17	1,235,590	1.4	0.24	57,440	11,004
2019	1	20	21	1,244,526	1.7	0.08	56,209	9,036
2020	1	23	24	1,301,289	1.8	0.08	52,912	8,020
2021	1	11	12	1,239,466	1.0	0.08	49,370	6,754
2022	1	14	15	1,214,728	1.2	0.08	52,706	6,445
<b>2023</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1,236,677</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>0.08</b>	<b>50,888</b>	<b>7,088</b>
Mandatory	156	1,151	1,307	40,825,135	3.2	0.38	1,455,490	175,092
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>2,450</b>	<b>3,031</b>	<b>63,785,861</b>	<b>4.75</b>	<b>0.91</b>	<b>1,616,503</b>	<b>175,092</b>

➤ HUNTING INCIDENT RATE (AVE.) DURING VOLUNTARY PROGRAM - 7.5 per 100,000 hunting licenses issued.

➤ HUNTING INCIDENT RATE (AVE.) DURING MANDATORY PROGRAM - 3.2 per 100,000 hunting licenses issued.



# Texas Hunting Accidents 2019 - 2023

\* TYPE "A" Incidents - resulting from a discharge of a firearm or bow while hunting, which causes the injury or death of any person(s)

INCIDENTS	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Fatal	1	1	1	1	1
Non-fatal	20	23	11	14	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>

SHOOTER'S AGE					
0-9 yrs. of age	0	0	0	0	0
10-19	5	5	2	3	2
20-29	3	7	0	2	3
30-39	2	2	5	1	1
40-49	2	2	1	2	1
50-59	2	2	1	2	1
60 & over	2	4	2	4	2
Unknown	5	2	1	1	1
	<b>21</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>

SHOOTER'S EQUIPMENT					
Rifles	6	8	3	4	1
Shotguns	14	14	8	8	9
Handguns	1	2	1	2	0
Muzzleloader	0	0	0	0	0
Bow/Air Gun	0	0	0	1	1
	<b>21</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>

ADDITIONAL FACTS					
	Percentage in parenthesis (%)				
Violated Game Law	3 (18)	5 (18)	0 (0)	2 (13)	2 (18)
Self-Inflicted	6 (35)	8 (38)	2 (17)	7 (47)	1 (9)
Alcohol a Factor	2 (12)	2 (10)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Completed Hunt Ed	6 (28)	11 (46)	6 (50)	9 (60)	7 (64)
ONLINE-ONLY HE	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (17)	2 (13)	2 (18)
Military Exempt	0 (0)	1 (4)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)

## Incident profile over time:

- Incidents were highly preventable thru proper training.
- Over half had not completed hunter education training.
- Victims were not wearing hunter orange clothing.
- Most incidents due to hunter judgment errors; carelessness.
- Most shooters had over 10 years of hunting experience.
- Most shooters were not under the influence of alcohol.
- If self-inflicted, shooters handled firearms carelessly.
- Distance of muzzle to wound was typically under 15 yards.
- Incident occurred towards dusk; fatigue a possible factor.

## Significant factors in 2023

- RECORD LOW YEAR - Lowest on record by one incident.
- Swinging on Game Outside Safe Zone led the list of incidents with 4 (40%), #1 'Hunter Judgement' cause.
- Doves # 1 animal hunted during incidents with 7.
- Hunting incidents for hogs not a factor in 2023.
- SHOTGUNS used in all but two (2) of the incidents.
- Seven (7) HUNTER EDUCATION graduates were involved in hunting incidents, two (2) who took online-only courses.
- Two (2) LAW VIOLATIONS recorded.
- Four (4) TYPE B incidents - two incidents involving helicopter crashes with five non-fatal injuries, one involving sulfide gas poisoning with 3 fatalities and one fatality involving fall from elevated stand due to fire.
- One (1) TYPE C non-fatal muzzleloader incident.
- One (1) crossbow incident - a first in history of incidents.

MAIN CONTRIBUTING FACTORS	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>I. HUNTER JUDGMENT</b>					
Victim out of sight /moved into line of fire	3	3	0	0	3
Victim hit by shooter swinging on game	7	8	9	5	4
Victim mistaken for game	0	1	0	1	0
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>

<b>II. SKILL/APTITUDE</b>					
Trigger caught on object	0	0	0	0	0
Loading/Unloading gun	0	0	0	1	0
Improper crossing	0	0	0	0	0
Careless handling	3	6	3	3	1
Dropped firearm	0	0	0	0	0
Shooter stumbled/fell	1	0	0	0	0
Careless Bow Handling	0	0	0	1	1
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>

<b>III. SAFETY</b>					
Removing/placing firearm in vehicle	0	0	0	1	1
Discharge of firearm in/on vehicle or boat/fell from insecure rest	2	2	0	2	1
Running or entering/exiting stand with loaded firearm	0	0	0	0	0
Horseplay	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>

<b>IV. OTHER</b>					
Ricochet	1	1	0	0	0
Obstruction in Barrel or Faulty Equipment	3	3	0	1	0
Mixed Ammo/Incorrect Sub.	1	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>

<b>ANIMAL HUNTED</b>					
Dove	13	11	6	4	7
Deer	4	1	1	5	2
Rabbit/Hare	0	2	0	1	0
Feral Hog/Peccary	2	6	2	2	0
Quail/Pheasant	1	0	2	1	0
Turkey	0	1	0	0	0
Ducks/Geese	0	1	0	2	2
Coyote/Bobcat	0	1	0	0	0
Squirrel/Prairie Dog	0	0	0	0	0
Nongame birds/Snake	0	1	0	0	0
Furbearers (2021 - Skunk)	0	0	1	0	0
Exotic	1	0	0	0	0
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>

## 2023 FATAL ACCIDENTS - FIREARM/BOW HUNTING RELATED (A)\*

\* Firearm/Bow & Hunting Related - Accident/incident resulting from the discharge of a firearm or bow while hunting, which causes death to any person(s).

Date	County	Shooter's Age/Gender	Firearm	Animal Hunted	Self-Inflicted?	Hunter Ed? (Shooter)
12-3	Presidio	15/M	Rifle	Deer/ Exotics	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	<b>Placing Firearm in Vehicle</b> – Shooter was placing loaded rifle in gun case in vehicle, and carelessly discharged it as victim moved in front of the muzzle. Bullet fatally struck the victim in the right side of his chest, with the bullet exiting victim's back.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point the muzzle in a safe direction; always unload when no longer hunting, especially prior to placing firearms in cases and in vehicles; be aware of others approaching and communicate with them about their position relative to any firearms present to ensure they do not walk in front of a muzzle; complete hunter education, even if not required.					

## 2023 NON-FATAL INCIDENTS - FIREARM/BOW HUNTING RELATED (A)\*

\* Firearm/Bow & Hunting Related - Accident/incident resulting from the discharge of a firearm or bow while hunting, which causes injury to any person(s).

Date	County	Shooter's Age/Gender	Firearm	Animal Hunted	Self-Inflicted?	Hunter Ed? (Shooter)
1-8	Nueces	30/M	Shotgun	Waterfowl	No	Yes
<i>Comments:</i>	<b>Discharge of Firearm in Vehicle/Boat</b> – Duck hunter exited blind with loaded firearm and placed it on boat, so he and his two friends could gather decoys. Dog stepped on/discharged shotgun while moving around boat. Pellets entered victim in elbow, side, hip, and leg as he was picking up decoys.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always unload when no longer hunting, especially prior to exiting blinds or stands; case unloaded shotgun prior to placing in a boat or vehicle; apply what is learned in hunter education.					
1-23	Jackson	22/M	Shotgun	Waterfowl	Yes	Yes
<i>Comments:</i>	<b>Careless Handling</b> – Duck hunter and his friend were hustling back to blind after chasing some ducks. Victim carelessly discharged his firearm which he was carrying in his left hand. He and his friend claimed that brush had activated the trigger. Pellets entered his right-hand fingers.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point the muzzle in a safe direction and maintain control of the firearm with an approved carry; keep fingers outside of trigger guard, protecting the trigger from brush; apply what is learned in hunter education.					
9-1	Martin	28/M	Shotgun	Dove	No	Yes
<i>Comments:</i>	<b>Swinging Outside Safe Zone of Fire</b> – Shooter was walking to retrieve a downed bird and fired at another low-flying dove outside of his safe zone and 'peppered' his hunting companion who was standing on another side of pond from shooter. Pellets struck victim in his leg, chest, and left arm.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point the muzzle in a safe direction and stick to a safe zone of fire; communicate with hunting companions and other hunters in the area; know where others are always positioned; make sure to identify the target clearly; identify what is in front of and behind the target before shooting; apply what is learned in hunter education.					

Date	County	Shooter's Age/Gender	Firearm	Animal Hunted	Self-Inflicted?	Hunter Ed? (Shooter)
9-2	Medina	41/M	Shotgun	Dove	No	Yes
<i>Comments:</i>	<b>Victim Out of Sight of Shooter</b> – Shooter illegally fired over adjoining property fence at doves outside of a safe zone of fire. Pellets struck Hondo Police Officer responding to a complaint of pellets striking nearby houses. Pellets struck officer in his lower leg.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point the muzzle in a safe direction and stick to a safe zone of fire; communicate with hunting companions and other hunters in the area; know where others are always positioned; never shoot in the direction of another property or over a fence; make sure to identify the target clearly; identify what is in front of and behind the target before shooting; obey the law and apply what is learned in hunter education.					
9-5	Blanco	26/M	Shotgun	Dove	No	Yes
<i>Comments:</i>	<b>Swinging Outside Safe Zone of Fire</b> – Shooter fired at low-flying doves outside of his safe zone and ‘peppered’ his hunting companion who was standing on another side of pond from shooter. Pellets struck victim in his face, chest, and legs.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point the muzzle in a safe direction and stick to a safe zone of fire; communicate with hunting companions and other hunters in the area; know where others are always positioned; make sure to identify the target clearly; identify what is in front of and behind the target before shooting; apply what is learned in hunter education.					
9-8	Mitchell	61/F	Shotgun	Dove	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	<b>Swinging Outside Safe Zone of Fire</b> – Shooter fired at low-flying doves outside of her safe zone and ‘peppered’ her grandson who was standing on another side of pond. Thirty pellets struck victim in his left arm and side					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point the muzzle in a safe direction and stick to a safe zone of fire; communicate with hunting companions and other hunters in the area; know where others are always positioned; make sure to identify the target clearly; identify what is in front of and behind the target before shooting; complete hunter education, even if not required.					
9-8	Coryell	51/M	Shotgun	Dove	No	Yes
<i>Comments:</i>	<b>Swinging Outside Safe Zone of Fire</b> – Shooter was retrieving downed dove next to a pond and fired at another low-flying doves outside of his safe zone and ‘peppered’ his son who was sitting on the other side of the pond. Pellets struck victim in eye socket, right hand, and leg.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point the muzzle in a safe direction and stick to a safe zone of fire; communicate with hunting companions and other hunters in the area; know where others are always positioned; position should not be in front of other hunters in the group; make sure to identify the target clearly; identify what is in front of and behind the target before shooting; apply what is learned in hunter education.					
9-23	Medina	64/M	Shotgun	Dove	No	Yes
<i>Comments:</i>	<b>Victim Out of Sight of Shooter</b> – Shooter was retrieving a downed dove which flew again to get away. Shooter fired and ‘peppered’ a hunter from another dove hunting group, who was out of sight of shooter over a hill. Pellets struck victim in multiple areas of his body from head to hands to legs.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point the muzzle in a safe direction and stick to a safe zone of fire; communicate with hunting companions and other hunters in the area; know where others are always positioned; make sure to identify the target clearly; identify what is in front of and behind the target before shooting; apply what is learned in hunter education.					
10-7	Jim Hogg	UNK	Shotgun	Dove	No	UNK
<i>Comments:</i>	<b>Victim Out of Sight of Shooter</b> – Multiple, unknown shooters fired at doves outside of a safe zone of fire. Pellets struck victim in the eye causing blurred vision. The victim was retrieving downed birds in a thicket at the time, out of sight of other shooters hunting nearby.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point the muzzle in a safe direction and stick to a safe zone of fire; communicate with hunting companions and other hunters in the area; know where others are always positioned; make sure to identify the target clearly; identify what is in front of and behind the target before shooting; complete hunter education, even if not required.					

Date	County	Shooter's Age/Gender	Firearm	Animal Hunted	Self-Inflicted?	Hunter Ed? (Shooter)
10-15	Bosque	15/M	Crossbow	Deer	No	No
Comments:	<b>Careless Handling of a Bow</b> - Three youth were hunting deer with crossbow and were returning to vehicle. Shooter was carrying loaded crossbow and carelessly discharged it while victim was walking by in front of him, sending arrow through his left elbow and torso.					
Prevention:	Always point the muzzle or arrow in a safe direction; always unload when no longer hunting; never carry a knocked or loaded arrow; obey the law by purchasing a hunting license and completing hunter education.					

## 2023 NON-FIREARM/BOW HUNTING RELATED (B) \*\*

Type	Age/Gender	Fatal?	Comments
Helicopter Crash 3/11/23	38/M	NO	Helicopter pilot and three others were conducting wildlife management activities (hunting hogs) on their ranch when the helicopter skids got stuck and propelled rotor forward and into the ground.
Helicopter Crash 5/16/23	30/M	NO	Helicopter was hovering over a rabbit when the malfunction occurred with injuries to one of the passengers.
Gas Poisoning 8/11/23	37/M 26/F 45/M	YES	Three (3) hog hunters died in 4-foot-wide hole that contained 8 feet of water and hydrogen sulfide gas. Apparently one of the hunters was trying to rescue his dog and was followed in the hole by the other hunters - all suffered from gas poisoning and died.
Tree Stand - Fall 12/10/23	66/M	YES	Victim fatally fell or jumped from an elevated stand due to a fire from a heating element he took up the stand with him. He had fractured ribs, aorta laceration and burns.

\*\* **B. Non-Firearm/Bow Related** - Accidents/incidents while hunting, *not* involving the discharge of a firearm or bow, which causes injury or death of any person(s).

## 2023 NON-HUNTING/FIREARM RELATED (C) \*\*\*

Type	Age/Gender/ Firearm	Fatal?	Comments
Black Powder Target Shooting 4/9/23	59/M Self-inflicted and two-party incident	NO	During a hang fire, the victim was trying to manually extract a muzzleloader ball when the firearm discharged, sending the ramrod out the muzzle and through the shooter's arm and into the arm of the shooter's companion standing nearby.

\*\*\* **C. Non-Hunting Related** - Other reported accidents/incidents resulting from the discharge of a firearm/bow, which causes the injury or death of any person(s), other than while hunting (reported to TPWD Game Wardens)



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