

TEXAS HUNTING INCIDENT ANALYSIS



2017

Federal Aid Project
W-104-S

For more information about hunting accidents/incidents
or the hunter education program in Texas,
email education@tpwd.texas.gov or call (512) 389-8140

TEXAS HUNTING INCIDENT DATA (1966-2017)

* *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	1.9	13,323
1983	17	63	80	1,325,474	6	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
Voluntary	425	1299	1724	22,960,726	7.5	1.85	161,013



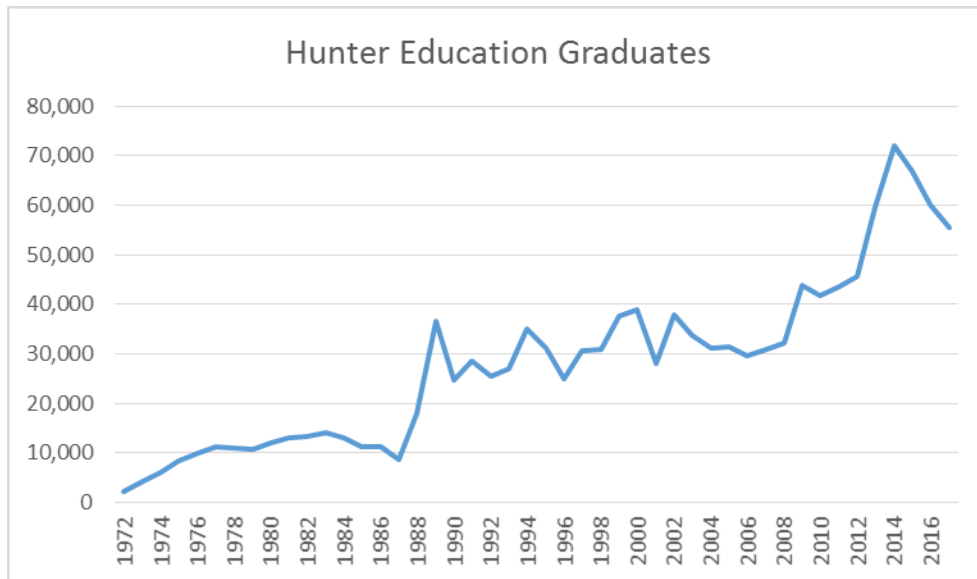
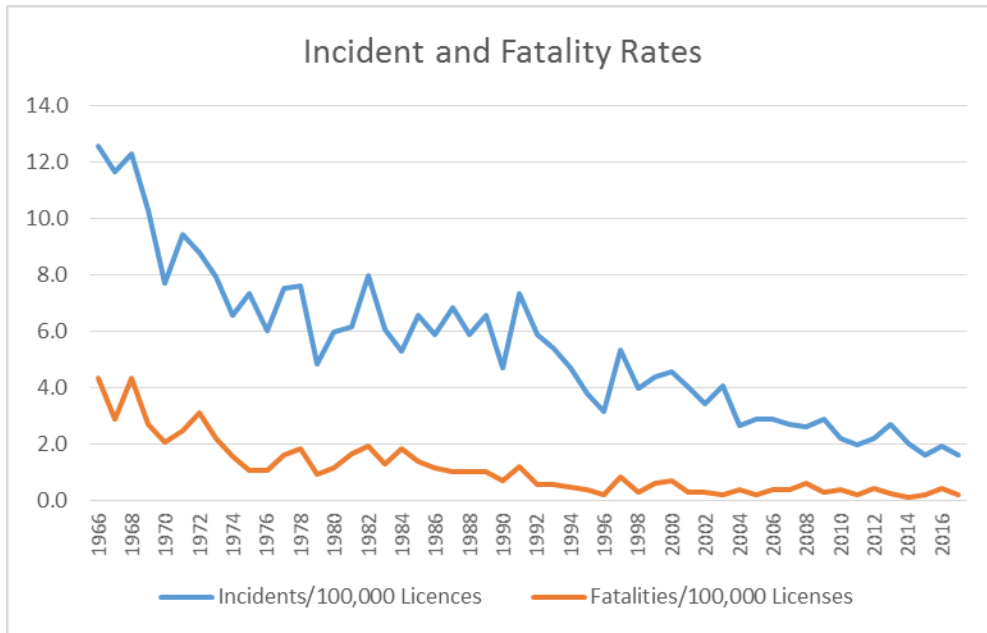
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* *Mandatory* * Hunter Education Program 1988 - Present

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	0.3	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	0.2	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	18	20	1,248,450	1.6	0.2	55,507	12,113
Mandatory	148	1,058	1,206	33,352,859	3.6	0.44	1,135,965	126,745
TOTAL	573	2,357	2,930	56,313,585	5.2	1.02	1,296,978	126,745

- HUNTING INCIDENT RATE (AVE.) DURING VOLUNTARY PROGRAM - 7.5 per 100,000 hunting licenses issued.
- HUNTING INCIDENT RATE (AVE.) DURING MANDATORY PROGRAM - 3.6 per 100,000 hunting licenses issued.
- HUNTING FATALITY RATE (AVE.) DURING VOLUNTARY PROGRAM - 1.85 per 100,000 hunting licenses issued.
- HUNTING FATALITY RATE (AVE.) DURING MANDATORY PROGRAM - 0.44 per 100,000 hunting licenses issued.



Texas Hunting Incidents 2013 – 2017

* 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	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total	33	26	20	24	20
Fatal	3	2	2	5	2
Non-fatal	30	24	18	19	18

SHOOTER'S AGE					
0-9 yrs. of age	1	2	1	0	0
10-19	7	8	1	5	7
20-29	6	3	3	3	5
30-39	7	3	1	4	3
40-49	4	5	4	3	0
50-59	4	1	4	4	2
60 & over	1	2	5	3	2
Unknown	3	2	1	2	1
TOTAL	33	26	20	24	20

SHOOTER'S EQUIPMENT					
Rifles	20	8	4	6	5
Shotguns	10	17	15	14	12
Handguns	3	1	1	3	3
Muzzleloader	0	0	0	0	0
Bow/Air Gun	0	0	0	1	0
TOTAL	33	26	20	24	20

ADDITIONAL FACTS					
	Percentage in parenthesis (%)				
Violated Game Law	9 (27)	5 (19)	3 (15)	5 (21)	9 (45)
Self-Inflicted	17 (52)	6 (23)	6 (30)	6 (25)	8 (40)
Alcohol or Drugs a Factor	5 (15)	3 (11)	2 (10)	2 (8)	1 (05)
Shooter Completed Hunter Ed	11 (33)	9 (35)	10 (50)	10 (42)	5 (25)
ONLINE-ONLY HE	0 (0)	1 (4)	2 (10)	3 (13)	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 were due to lack of hunter judgment
- 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 generally under 15 yards
- Incident occurred towards dusk; fatigue a possible factor

Significant for 2017

- Six (6) FATALITIES involved hunters DROWNING (Type 'B' Incidents - non-firearm related hunting incidents)
- Nine (9) incidents occurred in each of the HUNTER JUDGMENT and SKILL & APTITUDE categories
- A decline in fatal incidents (from 5 to 2) occurred in 2017
- CARELESS HANDLING led the list of incidents with six (6) - due to pointing a firearm in an unsafe direction
- DOVE hunting, with seven (7), continued to lead the list of animals hunted at time of incident; HOGS up to 4 in 2017
- SHOTGUNS, with 12, continued to be the dominant firearm involved in hunting incidents
- Five (5) HUNTER EDUCATION graduates, significantly down, were involved in hunting incidents in 2017 (25%)
- One incident (5%) involved ALCOHOL use, and 9 (45%) involved LAW VIOLATIONS, significantly up in 2017

MAIN CONTRIBUTING FACTOR	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
HUNTER JUDGMENT					
Victim out of sight /moved into line of fire	3	4	2	5	3
Victim hit by shooter swinging on game	3	9	11	5	4
Victim mistaken for game	2	3	0	2	2
TOTAL	8	16	13	12	9

SKILL/APTITUDE					
Trigger caught on object	3	1	0	0	0
Loading/Unloading gun	0	1	0	1	1
Improper crossing	0	0	0	1	0
Careless handling	8	5	5	6	7
Dropped firearm	1	0	0	0	1
Shooter stumbled/fell	2	1	0	1	0
Careless Bow Handling	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	14	8	5	9	9

SAFETY					
Removing/placing firearm in vehicle	2	0	0	0	1
Discharge of firearm in/on vehicle	3	2	1	1	0
Improper crossing obstacle; Walking with loaded firearm	2	0	0	1	0
Horseplay	0	0	0	0	0
Failure to use fall restraint	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	7	2	1	2	1

OTHER					
Ricochet	1	0	0	0	0
Obstruction in Barrel or Faulty Equipment	3	0	0	1	0
Mixed Ammo/Incorrect Substitution	0	0	1	0	1
TOTAL	4	0	1	1	1
GRAND TOTAL	33	26	20	24	20

ANIMAL HUNTED					
	Percentage in parenthesis (%)				
Dove	6 (18)	12 (46)	12 (60)	7 (29)	7 (35)
Deer	8 (24)	6 (23)	2 (10)	3 (13)	2 (10)
Rabbit/Hare	2 (6)	1 (4)	1 (5)	1 (4)	1 (05)
Feral Hog/Peccary	5 (15)	1 (4)	1 (5)	2 (8)	4 (20)
Quail/Pheasant	0	4 (15)	3 (15)	4 (17)	2 (10)
Turkey	0	0	0	0	0
Ducks/Geese	2 (6)	0	0	2 (8)	2 (10)
Coyote/Bobcat	2 (6)	0	0	1 (4)	0
Squirrel/Prairie Dog	1 (3)	1 (4)	1 (5)	1 (4)	0
Nongame birds/Snake	1(3)	0	0	1 (4)	2 (10)
Furbearers/Raccoons	1 (3)	0	0	1 (4)	0
Exotic	2 (6)	1 (4)	0	1 (4)	0
Unknown	3 (1)	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	33	26	20	24	20

2017 FATAL INCIDENTS - FIREARM/BOW HUNTING RELATED (A)*

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

Date	County	Shooter's Age/Gender	Firearm	Animal Hunted	Self-Inflicted?	Hunter Ed? (Shooter)
5-19	Dallas	UNK/M	Rifle	Hog	No	UNK
<i>Comments:</i>	Four hunters were hunting hogs in an open field at night and the victim lagged behind the others. As the hunters (unknown) fired at scattering hogs, one of their bullets struck in the right upper chest of the victim. He was crouched, possibly looking like a hog, especially in the dark.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; know where all others are at all times; clearly identify the target prior to raising the firearm towards it; use binoculars to identify game; be especially careful if hunting at night or in the dark and wear hunter/blaze orange to be seen; avoid colors of clothing that resemble animals being hunted; complete hunter education, even if not required.					
11-18	Duval	11/F	Rifle	Rabbit	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Young shooter and her younger brother went hunting in the early morning without permission, taking the keys and retrieving the .22 cal. rifle from the truck and ammunition from a canister. They headed to a blind about 400 yards from the camp, and while in the blind shot at a rabbit. At the time of the shot, their cousin was walking towards the blind and was struck in the chest by a bullet while about 150 yards away.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; clearly identify the target, what is in front of it and beyond, prior to raising the firearm towards it; use binoculars to identify game; wear hunter/blaze orange to be seen; avoid colors of clothing that resemble animals being hunted; complete hunter education, obey parents and hunting laws.					

2017 NON-FATAL INCIDENTS - FIREARM/BOW HUNTING RELATED (A)*

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

Date	County	Shooter's Age/Gender	Firearm	Animal Hunted	Self-Inflicted?	Hunter Ed? (Shooter)
1-7	Chambers	12/M	Shotgun	Waterfowl	Yes	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter was sitting back down in the blind with his loaded firearm propped against the bench. He bumped and dropped the shotgun, and the butt struck the ground. It discharged and the blast and pellets grazed him in the upper chest.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; keep your finger outside the trigger guard until you are ready to shoot; handle firearms carefully; always unload before placing firearm on the ground or against a secure rest; complete hunter education, even if not required.					
1-9	Jim Hogg	54/M	Shotgun	Quail	Yes	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Obstruction in a side-by-side double barrel shotgun caused a blowout of the left barrel near the shooter's left hand, taking off part of his thumb.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always inspect firearms before use; use and only carry the proper, current ammunition that matches the firearm and the game hunted; complete hunter education, even if not required.					
4-18	Bowie	36/M	Shotgun	Snake	Yes	Yes
<i>Comments:</i>	After shooting a snake, shooter placed loaded shotgun under bungee cords on the front of his ATV and discharged it towards his right hand/fingers in the process.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; always unload prior to transporting firearms and no longer hunting; never carry a loaded firearm in a vehicle or hunt from a vehicle; place unloaded firearms in secure rests; never use animals as practice targets; apply what was learned in hunter education.					

Date	County	Shooter's Age/Gender	Firearm	Animal Hunted	Self-Inflicted?	Hunter Ed?
8-5	Wise	26/M	Rifle	Hog	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	After victim shot a hog, his hunting companion, the shooter, laid down and then picked up his loaded .270 rifle. In the process he carelessly discharged it towards the victim's foot.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; always unload when no longer hunting such as when crossing obstacles/difficult terrain, prior to field dressing game or transporting firearms; Never lay a loaded firearm on the ground or in an insecure manner; obey the law; complete hunter education, especially when required.					
8-21	Runnels	16/M	Handgun	Snake	Yes	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter and friends were fishing and he saw a snake and ran towards it to shoot it with his handgun. He tripped and fell and carelessly discharged the .22 cal. pistol towards his thigh.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction at all times; treat firearms as if loaded and handle them carefully, especially short-barreled arms; carry a loaded handgun over an empty chamber or in a proper holster; obey the law; complete hunter education, especially when required.					
9-1	Coleman	25/F	Shotgun	Dove	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Victim was struck by a single pellet fired by a shooter some distance away who was swinging on game outside of a safe zone of fire.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always maintain a safe zone of fire; communicate with other hunters; know where others are positioned at all times; identify the target clearly; identify what is in front of and behind the target before shooting; obey the law; complete hunter education, especially when required.					
9-2	Bastrop	34/M	Shotgun	Dove	Yes	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Allegedly having returned from hunting doves, shooter and companions were drinking, with a loaded shotgun still present as the scene. Shooter carelessly shot his foot while horse playing around the campfire. Felony possession of a firearm (3 rd degree) and numerous dove hunting/hunter education citations issued.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; always unload when no longer hunting such as when crossing obstacles/difficult terrain, prior to field dressing game, transporting firearms or while in camp; Never place a loaded firearm next to a tree or other insecure rest; never drink before or while hunting or shooting; obey the law; complete hunter education, especially when required.					
9-2	Edwards	65/M	Shotgun	Dove	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter swung on victim outside of his safe zone of fire. Victim was sitting across a pond and was struck by nine pellets in his torso and neck area.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always maintain a safe zone of fire; communicate with hunting companions; know where others are positioned at all times; 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.					
9-2	Menard	59/M	Shotgun	Dove	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter swung on victim outside of his safe zone of fire. Victim was sitting across a pond and was struck by pellets in his head and left arm. He was taken to hospital by life flight helicopter.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always maintain a safe zone of fire; communicate with hunting companions; know where others are positioned at all times; make sure to identify the target clearly; identify what is in front of and behind the target before shooting; apply what was learned in hunter education.					
9-16	Liberty	17/M	Shotgun	Waterfowl	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Hunters were sitting around a pond awaiting legal shooting hours for waterfowl. As shooter readjusted his position/body, he carelessly discharged his 12 gauge shotgun towards the victim, who was sitting nearby. Pellets struck victim in the foot. Numerous citations were issued.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; always unload when no longer hunting such as when crossing obstacles/difficult terrain, prior to field dressing game or transporting firearms; Never lay a loaded firearm on the ground or in an insecure manner; obey the law; complete hunter education, especially when required.					

Date	County	Shooter's Age/Gender	Firearm	Animal Hunted	Self-Inflicted?	Hunter Ed?
9-22	Zavala	20/M	Shotgun	Dove	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Victim was struck by pellets throughout his body as he was retrieving his downed bird. Shooter did not realize victim had moved into his zone of fire as he shot at low-flying doves.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always maintain a safe zone of fire; communicate with hunting companions; know where others are positioned at all times; make sure to identify the target clearly, what is in front of/behind the target before shooting; obey the law; complete hunter education, especially when required.					
9-23	Cameron	14/M	Shotgun	Dove	Yes	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Victim and friends were hunting in an open field. Victim carelessly discharged his shotgun as the muzzle was resting on his foot.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; always unload when no longer hunting such as when gathering with fellow hunters in the field; Never rest a muzzle on your toe while hunting or shooting; obey the law; complete hunter education, especially when required.					
9-30	Live Oak	14/M	Shotgun	Dove	No	Yes
<i>Comments:</i>	Victim was struck by pellets to face, shoulder and neck from a shot fired by a shooter on the other side of a brush row, out of sight from the victim.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always maintain a safe zone of fire; communicate with other hunters; know where others are positioned at all times; identify the target clearly; identify what is in front of and behind the target before shooting; apply what was learned in hunter education.					
11-05	Mason	71/M	Rifle	Deer	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	While placing firearm in the vehicle, shooter carelessly discharged a loaded firearm already laying on the seat. Bullet struck victim in the upper arm, as he stood on the other side of the car.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; always unload prior to transporting firearms and no longer hunting; never carry a loaded firearm in a vehicle or hunt from a vehicle; keep your finger outside the trigger guard unless shooting; only load when you are in the field and ready to take a shot at game; complete hunter education, even if not required.					
11-19	Hardeman	28/M	Handgun	Hog	Yes	Yes
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter was unloading his handgun while riding on an ATV back to the hunting camp. He carelessly discharged it towards his thigh, and the bullet exited through his calf.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction; always unload prior to transporting firearms and no longer hunting; never carry a loaded firearm in a vehicle; maintain safe muzzle control and direction while loading/unloading; obey the law; apply what was learned in hunter education.					
12-3	Terrell	14/M	Handgun	Deer	Yes	Yes
<i>Comments:</i>	Victim carried a loaded .22 caliber handgun in his "snake boots" while hunting deer. He got up to stretch his legs and carelessly discharged it towards his right ankle area.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always point muzzle in a safe direction at all times; treat firearms as if loaded and handle them carefully, especially short-barreled arms; carry a loaded handgun over an empty chamber and/or in a proper holster; apply what was learned in hunter education.					
12-4	Nacogdoches	21/M	Rifle	Hog	No	No
<i>Comments:</i>	Shooter and his hunting companion trespassed onto a neighboring property and spotlighted a pipeline right-away for hogs. Shooter mistook victim (who had permission to hunt on the property) for a hog, seeing eyes in their light beam. The .223 bullet struck victim in upper thigh.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always maintain a safe zone of fire; communicate with hunting companions; know where others are positioned at all times; make sure to identify the target clearly, even at night; identify what is in front of and behind the target before shooting; hunt with written permission on private lands; obey the law; complete hunter education, especially when required.					

Date	County	Shooter's Age/Gender	Firearm	Animal Hunted	Self-Inflicted?	Hunter Ed?
12-10	Erath	36/M	Shotgun	Quail	No	Yes
<i>Comments:</i>	Victim (guide with pointing dogs) was struck by a single pellet fired by a shooter swinging on game outside of a safe zone of fire.					
<i>Prevention:</i>	Always maintain a safe zone of fire; communicate with other hunters; know where others are positioned at all times; identify the target clearly; identify what is in front of and behind the target before shooting; apply what was learned in hunter education.					

2017 NON-FIREARM/BOW HUNTING RELATED (B) **

Type	Age/Gender	Fatal?	Comments
Drowning/Hypothermia January 3, 2017	26/M and 5yr-old son	Yes	Man and his young son died at Lake Tawakoni while duck hunting; two were found not wearing life jackets; hypothermia a factor
Drowning/Hypothermia January 8, 2017	Three (3) Males Young 20s	Yes	Three male victims found drowned during cold spell in Texas Bays; the three were on a saltwater duck hunt; hypothermia a factor
Antler (Animal) Puncture January 16, 2017	40/M	No	Victim was releasing a deer that was accidentally trapped in his hog trapping pen and upon release was attacked by the buck deer; injury to inner thigh
Fall from elevated stand November 4, 2017	53/M	Yes	Victim was found dead from a 10-foot fall from a tripod. He was hunting hogs with a bow
Asphyxiation December 28, 2017	3 Family members - teens to 60s/M	Yes	Family members were at hunting camp and found dead due to carbon monoxide poisoning from a propane heater in their hunting cabin/shack
Drowning/Hypothermia December 31, 2017	57/M	Yes	Duck hunter was found drowned near his duck hunt on Caddo Lake

** **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).

2017 NON-HUNTING/FIREARM RELATED (C) ***

Type	Age/Gender/ Firearm	Fatal?	Comments
Careless Handling September 3, 2017	(51/M) Handgun	No	Victim was quick drawing his handgun and carelessly discharged it towards his right calf
Mixed Ammo November 9, 2017	55/M Rifle	No	Victim put the wrong ammunition in his rifle and it fractured when discharged, causing a laceration to his index finger.

*** **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)