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Results of the 2003-2004 Illinois Youth Hunter Survey



ILLINOIS
NATURAL
HISTORY
SURVEY



ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL
RESOURCES



Federal Aid Project
Number W-112-R-13
Job Number 103.1
Wildlife Restoration Fund
July 1, 2003 - Sept 30, 2004

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RESULTS OF THE 2003-2004 ILLINOIS YOUTH HUNTER SURVEY

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Division of Wildlife Resources**

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ABSTRACT

A sample of 300 youth hunters who successfully completed the Illinois Hunter Education Course was selected for participation in this survey. These youths were mailed a self-administered, 5-page questionnaire in March 2004, followed consecutively by a reminder postcard, a second copy of the questionnaire, another reminder postcard and, finally, a third copy of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was successfully delivered to 247 of the youths, 119 (48%) of which responded. There were 116 usable questionnaires in the sample. The responding youths averaged 17 years of age, were 88% male, and had hunted an average of 5.5 years in Illinois. Most youths hunted during the 2003-2004 season (79%), most hunted the first year after attending the hunter education course (84%), and most hunted every year (70%). The *species* they most commonly hunted were "Small game" (67%) and "Deer-firearm" (65%). Almost one-half (46%) of the youths spent 1-10 days engaged in hunting activities in 2003-2004. If they hunted less, the most common reasons were "Lack of time" (56%) and "School responsibilities" (41%). Most (74%) youths hunted with family members, and the father usually (86%) took them hunting for the first time. More than one-half (56%) of the youths have attended a state-sponsored youth hunt.

OBJECTIVES

This study will identify factors that contribute to recruitment, initiation, retention, and abandonment among both youth hunters new to hunting and adults who have participated in hunting.

METHODS

A sample of 300 youth hunters from throughout Illinois, and who successfully completed the Illinois Hunter Education Course, was selected for participation in this survey. A 5-page questionnaire was developed to investigate the youths' hunting effort after attending the hunter safety course, species hunted and harvested, individuals with whom they hunted, and participation in state-sponsored youth hunts.

The survey was conducted beginning in March 2004 and ending in May 2004. Each survey participant received an initial mailing consisting of a cover letter, questionnaire, and postage-paid return envelope. Nonrespondents were mailed a postcard reminder 14 days following the initial mailing. A second cover letter, questionnaire, and return envelope were mailed to nonrespondents 14 days after the postcard reminder, followed 14 days later by a second postcard reminder. Individuals who did not respond to the first two mailings were sent a third cover letter, questionnaire, and return envelope 14 days after the second postcard reminder. Full text of mailings can be found in Appendices A-D. A total of 53 youths were deleted from the original sample due to incorrect or inadequate mailing address. Returned questionnaires were coded for identification. Data were entered into SPSS 10.0 for analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We received 119 (48%) questionnaires from the 247 youths successfully contacted, of which 116 were usable. The responding youths averaged 17 years of age, were 88% male/12% female, and had hunted an average of 5.5 years in Illinois (Appendix E). One-half (51%) belonged to a national conservation organization (primarily Ducks Unlimited, National Wild Turkey Federation, or Pheasants Forever), and 75% were in households that subscribed to one or more hunting magazines (Appendix E). The youths resided in 54 of the 102 counties in Illinois (Appendix F).

A majority (79%) of the youths who responded to this survey hunted in Illinois during the 2003-2004 hunting season (Table 1).

Table 1. Youths who hunted in Illinois during the 2003-2004 hunting season, as estimated by the 2003-2004 Illinois Youth Hunter Survey ($n = 116$).

Hunt in IL	Percent Response
Yes	79
No	21

When asked in which year youths took their hunter safety course, the year most commonly cited was 1999; the years ranged from 1991 to 2002 (Table 2). The vast majority (84%) of the youths hunted the first year after attending the hunter safety course (Table 3) and, since attending a hunter safety course, a majority (70%) of them have hunted every year (Table 4). The most common reasons for not hunting were ‘School responsibilities’ (50%), ‘Lack of time’ (50%), and ‘Lack of interest’ (50%) (Figure 1).

Table 2. Year in which youths took their hunter safety course, as estimated by the 2003-2004 Illinois Youth Hunter Survey ($n = 101$).

Year	Percent Response	Year	Percent Response	Year	Percent Response
1991	2	1995	4	1999	35
1992	1	1996	12	2000	13
1993	1	1997	7	2001	2
1994	2	1998	21	2002	1

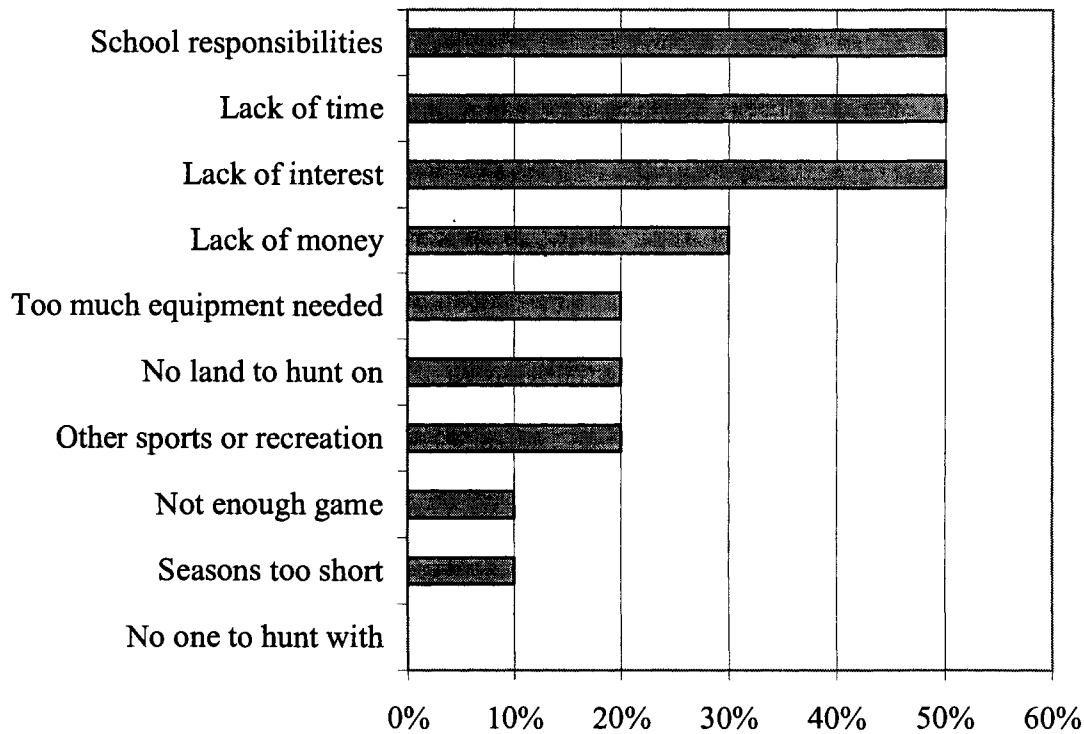
Table 3. Youths who hunted the first year after attending hunter safety course, as estimated by the 2003-2004 Illinois Youth Hunter Survey ($n = 114$).

	Percent Response
Yes	84
No	16

Table 4. Number of years youths hunted since attending a hunter safety course, as estimated by the 2003-2004 Illinois Youth Hunter Survey ($n = 115$).

	Percentage
Every year	70
Most years	7
Some years	14
None	9

Figure 1. Reasons youths did not hunt after attending hunter safety course, as estimated by the 2003-2004 Illinois Youth Hunter Survey ($n = 10$).



During the 2003-2004 season, almost half (46%) of youths hunted 1-10 days (Figure 2).

The species most commonly hunted were 'Small game' (67%) and 'Deer-firearm' (65%). The species youths harvested most often was 'Small game' (55%) (Figure 3).

Figure 2. Number of days youths hunted in Illinois during the 2003-2004 season for all game species, as estimated by the 2003-2004 Illinois Youth Hunter Survey ($n = 92$).

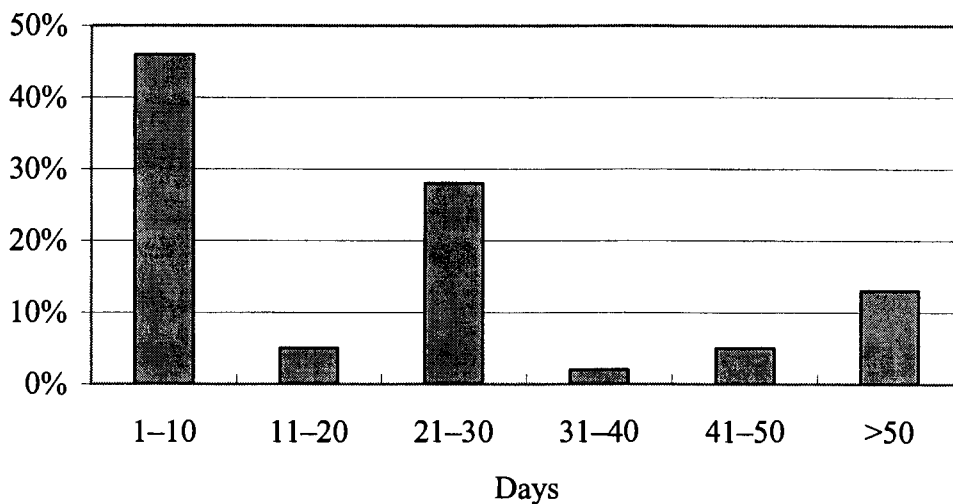
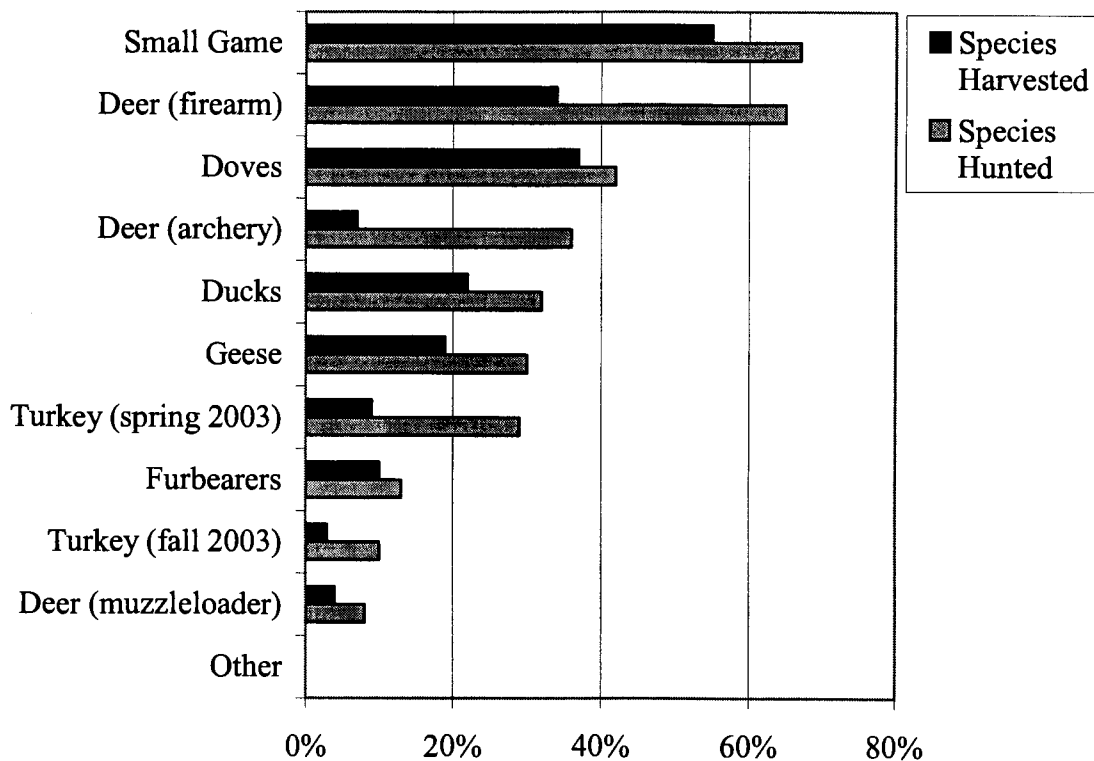


Figure 3. Species hunted and harvested by youths during the 2003-2004 season, as estimated by the 2003-2004 Illinois Youth Hunter Survey ($n = 92$).



Almost half (49%) of youths stated that they had hunted in Illinois for 2-5 years (Table 5). Of those who did not hunt every year, a majority (65%) bought an Illinois hunting license each year (Table 6).

Table 5. Number of years youths have hunted in Illinois, as estimated by the 2003-2004 Illinois Youth Hunter Survey ($n = 105$).

	Percent Response
1 year	8
2-5 years	49
6-10 years	36
More than 10 years	8

Table 6. If not hunting every year, percent of youths who buy an Illinois hunting license each year, as estimated by the 2003-2004 Illinois Youth Hunter Survey ($n = 54$).

	Percent Response
Yes	65
No	35

Compared to their first year of hunting, almost half (46%) of youths had increased their hunting effort in 2003-2004; 28% reported the same amount of effort, and 26% reported a decrease in hunting effort (Table 7). The most common reasons for an increase in effort were “Hunting partners” (55%), “Availability of land” (47%), and “More free time” (45%) (Figure 4). The most common reasons for a decrease in hunting effort were “Lack of time” (56%) and “School responsibilities” (41%) (Figure 5).

Table 7. Hunting effort by youths in 2003-2004 compared to the first year hunted, as estimated by the 2003-2004 Illinois Youth Hunter Survey ($n = 103$).

	Percentage
Increased	46
Stayed the same	28
Decreased	26

Figure 4. Reasons youths gave for an increase in hunting effort in 2003-2004, as estimated by the 2003-2004 Illinois Youth Hunter Survey ($n = 47$).

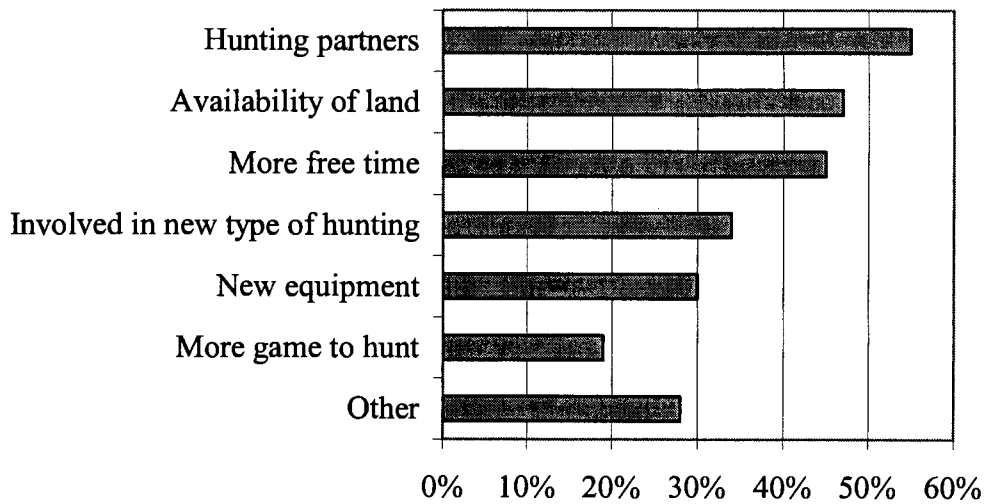
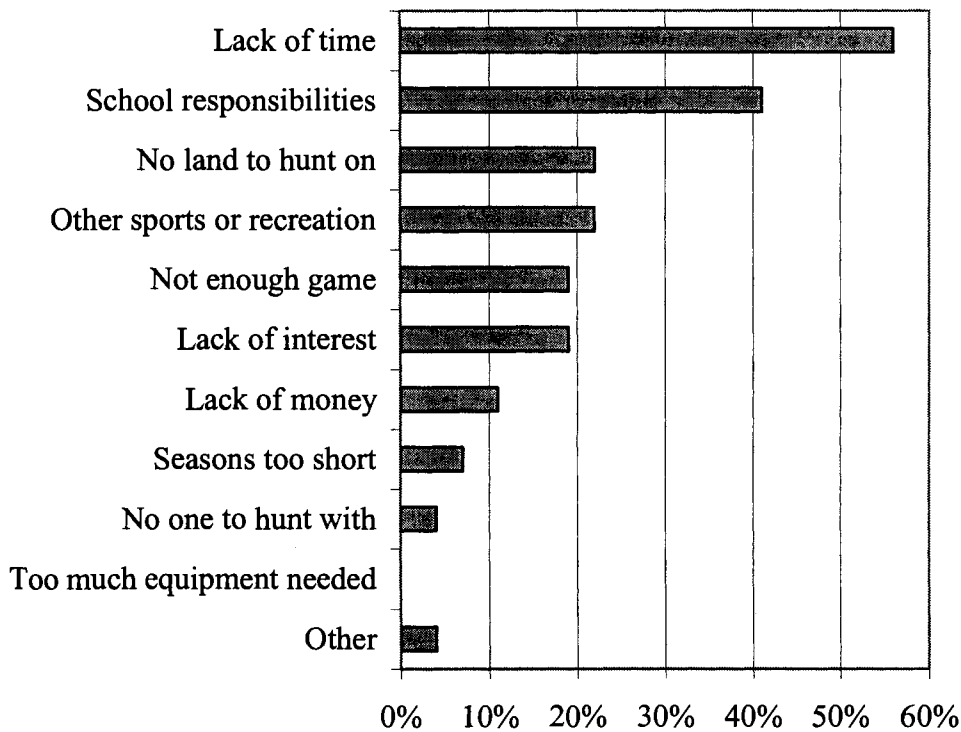


Figure 5. Reasons youth gave for a decrease in hunting effort in 2003-2004, as estimated by the 2003-2004 Illinois Youth Hunter Survey ($n = 27$).



Most (74%) youths reported that ‘Family members’ are the individuals with whom they usually hunt (Table 8). A vast majority of youths (96%) reported that other members of their family hunt. Of those, most (89%) reported that their father hunts (Table 9). The majority (86%) of youths also reported that their father took them hunting for the first time (Table 10). Youths were an average of 11 years old the first time they went hunting.

Table 8. Individuals with whom youths usually hunt, as estimated by the 2003-2004 Illinois Youth Hunter Survey ($n = 116$).

	Percent Response
Family members	74
Friends of family	37
Friends of mine	23
I usually hunt alone	5

Table 9. Percentage of youths' family members who hunt, as estimated by the 2003-2004 Illinois Youth Hunter Survey ($n = 116$).

	Percent Response
Yes	96
No	4
If "Yes," other members of their family who hunt ($n = 111$):	
	Percent Response
Father	89
Uncle/Aunt	57
Mother	6
Brother/Sister	35
Spouse	1
Cousin	44
Grandparent	37

Table 10. Individuals who took youths hunting for the first time, as estimated by the 2003-2004 Illinois Youth Hunter Survey ($n = 116$).

	Percent Response
Father	86
Uncle/Aunt	8
Friend of mine	3
Mother	1
Brother/Sister	8
Grandparent	11
Friend of family	5
Other ^a	1

^aOthers were not specified by respondents

During their first year of hunting, a majority of youths (59%) hunted 'Small game.' The next most commonly hunted species was 'Deer-firearm' (44%). The most commonly harvested species were "Small game" (49%, Figure 6). Since their first year of hunting, a majority (63%) of youths harvested "Small game" (Figure 7).

Figure 6. Game species youths hunted and harvested in the **first year** of hunting, as estimated by the 2003-2004 Illinois Youth Hunter Survey ($n = 116$).

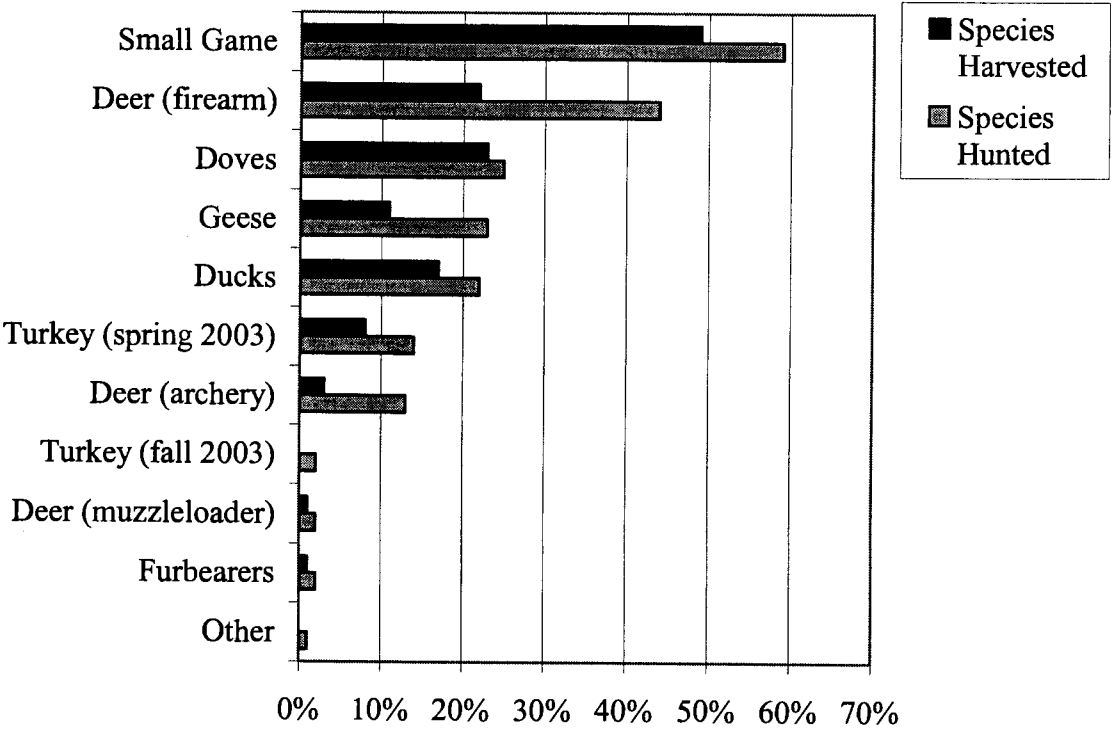
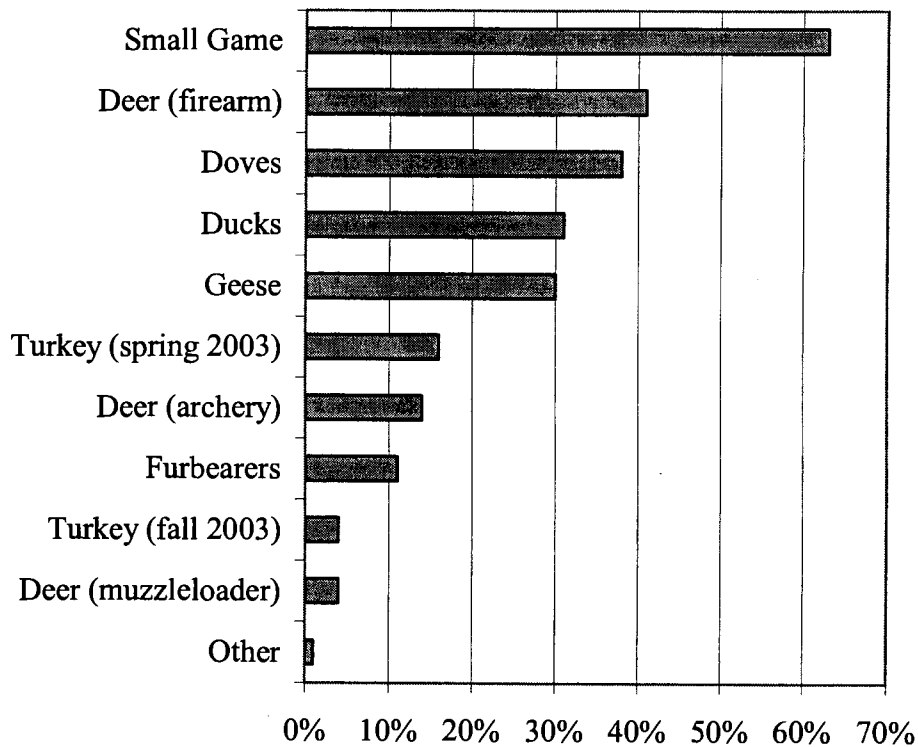


Figure 7. Game species youths harvested since the first year of hunting, as estimated by the 2003-2004 Illinois Youth Hunter Survey ($n = 116$).



A majority (56%) of youths have attended a state-sponsored youth hunt (Figure 8). Of those youths, the species most commonly hunted was “Deer” (48%). The next most commonly hunted species was “Waterfowl” (42%). The species most commonly harvested on the youth hunts was “Waterfowl” (41%, Figure 9). The father usually (81%) accompanied youths on state-sponsored youth hunts (Table 11).

Figure 8. Percentage of youth hunters who have attended a state-sponsored youth hunt (special hunt for hunters under 16 years of age), as estimated by the 2003-2004 Illinois Youth Hunter Survey ($n = 114$).

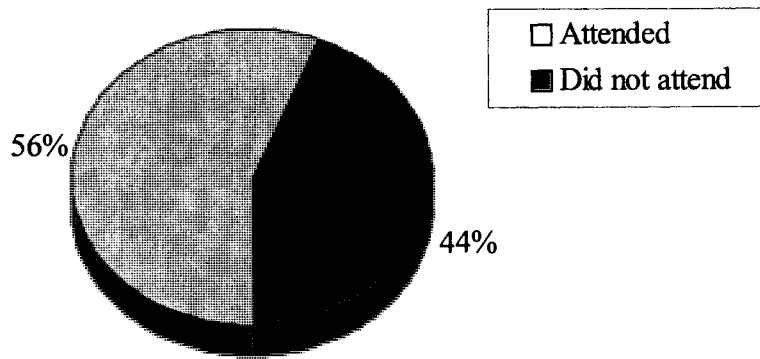


Figure 9. Game species youths hunted and harvested on state-sponsored youth hunts, as estimated by the 2003-2004 Illinois Youth Hunter Survey ($n = 64$).

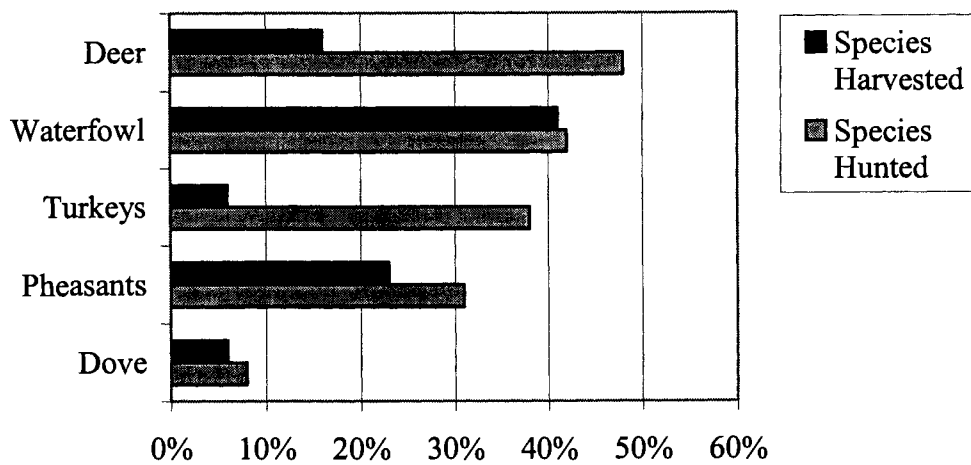


Table 11. Individuals who accompanied youths on a state-sponsored youth hunt, as estimated by the 2003-2004 Illinois Youth Hunter Survey ($n = 64$).

	Percent Response
Father	81
Friend of family	17
Grandparent	14
Friend of mine	11
Uncle/Aunt	9
Brother/Sister	6
Mother	<1
Other ^a	8

^aOthers were not specified by respondents.

Appendix A. Cover letter that accompanied first mailing of the Illinois Youth Hunter Survey.



ILLINOIS
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Dear Illinois Youth Hunter,

You are one of a select group of Illinois youth hunters asked to provide information about your hunting activities since attending a hunter safety course. Please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to us as soon as possible. The information you and other selected youth hunters furnish our biologists is vital for assessing our hunting seasons, managing wildlife populations, and allowing us to maximize hunting opportunities.

This survey is limited to those youth hunters selected. Please take a few minutes to complete the enclosed questionnaire even if you have discontinued hunting. A postage-paid envelope is provided for returning the questionnaire to us.

Thank you for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig A. Miller".

Craig A. Miller, Ph.D.

Wildlife Harvest and Human Dimensions Research Program

607 East Peabody Drive, Champaign, Illinois 61820-6970 USA
(217) 333-6880 Fax (217) 333-4949
<http://www.inhs.uiuc.edu>

Appendix B. Cover letter that accompanied second mailing of the Illinois Youth Hunter Survey.



ILLINOIS
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SURVEY



Dear Illinois Youth Hunter,

As one of a select group of Illinois youth hunters, you have been asked to provide information about your hunting experience. We recently mailed you a survey questionnaire regarding your hunting experiences in Illinois since attending a hunter safety course. We have not received your completed questionnaire at this time. Perhaps you recently mailed the questionnaire and it has not yet arrived in our office. If so, we thank you.

If you have not returned your completed questionnaire to us, please do so as soon as possible. Another copy of the questionnaire is enclosed. The information you and other selected youth hunters furnish our biologists is vital for assessing our hunting seasons, managing wildlife populations, and allowing us to maximize hunting opportunities.

This survey is limited to those youth hunters selected. Please complete the enclosed questionnaire even if you have discontinued hunting. A postage-paid envelope is provided for returning the questionnaire to us.

If you have questions, please call us at (217) 244-5121. Thank you for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig A. Miller".

Craig A. Miller, Ph.D.

Wildlife Harvest and Human Dimensions Research Program

607 East Peabody Drive, Champaign, Illinois 61820-6970 USA
(217) 333-6880 Fax (217) 333-4949
<http://www.inhs.uiuc.edu>

Appendix C. Reminder postcard sent after survey mailings.

Dear Illinois Youth Hunter,

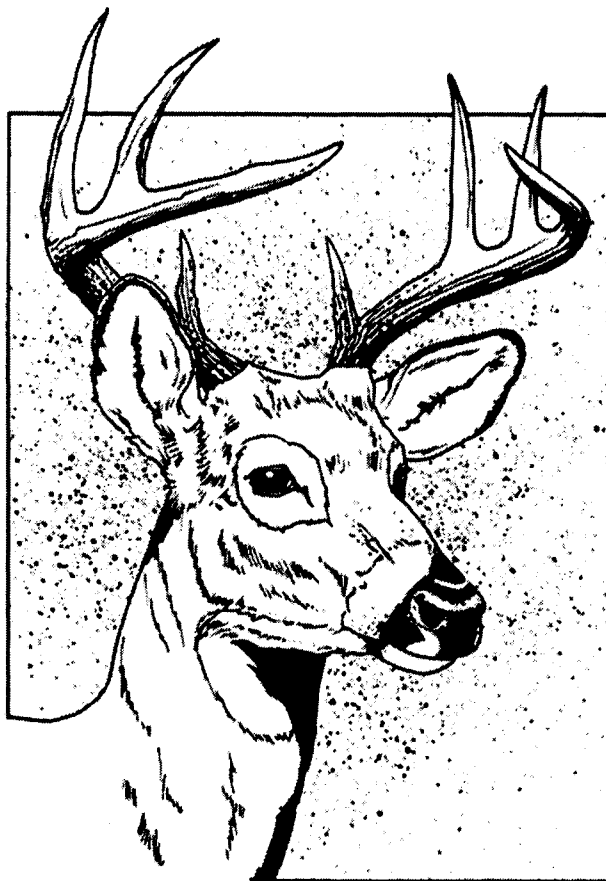
You have been selected to participate in the Illinois Youth Hunter Survey. A survey questionnaire was recently mailed to you. We have not received your questionnaire at this time. **If you have returned the questionnaire, we thank you and please disregard this reminder. If you have not returned the questionnaire, please do so as soon as possible. Your input is important!**

Your name and address will be deleted from our mailing list when your questionnaire is received.

Thank you for your cooperation.



Illinois Youth Hunter Survey



ALL RESPONSES ARE CONFIDENTIAL

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!

Postage-paid return envelope provided



Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Division of Wildlife Resources
and the
Illinois Natural History Survey



The Department of Natural Resources is requesting disclosure of information that is necessary to accomplish the statutory purpose as outlined under the Illinois Compiled Statutes, The Wildlife Code, Chapter 520. Disclosure of information is voluntary

Section 1. Hunting Effort. Please tell us about your hunting activities during the 2003-2004 seasons and your experiences related to hunting.

1. Did you hunt in Illinois during the 2003-2004 hunting seasons? _____ Yes _____ No

2. What year did you take your hunter safety course? _____

3. Did you hunt the **first year** after attending hunter safety? _____ Yes _____ No

4. How many years have you hunted since attending a hunter safety course?

_____ every year

_____ most years

_____ some years

_____ none (Please answer **Question 4a** below, then go to **Section 2**)

4a. If "No," what was the reason that you haven't hunted since attending a hunter safety course? (Please check all that apply)

_____ lack of time

_____ lack of interest

_____ lack of money

_____ no one to hunt with

_____ other sports or recreation

_____ seasons too short

_____ no land to hunt on

_____ not enough game

_____ school responsibilities

_____ too much equipment needed

_____ other (please identify): _____

5. Approximately how many days did you hunt in Illinois during the **2003-2004** seasons for all game species?

_____ 1 – 10 days

_____ 11 – 20 days

_____ 21 – 30 days

_____ 31 – 40 days

_____ 41 – 50 days

_____ more than 50 days

6. Which of the following species did you hunt in Illinois during the **2003-2004** seasons? Please check all that apply.

_____ Geese

_____ Deer (archery)

_____ Turkey (spring 2003)

_____ Doves

_____ Deer (firearm)

_____ Turkey (fall 2003)

_____ Furbearers

_____ Deer (muzzleloader)

_____ Small Game (pheasant, rabbit, etc.)

_____ Ducks

_____ Other (Please identify): _____

7. Which of the following species did you harvest in Illinois during the **2003-2004** seasons? Please check all that apply.

_____ Geese

_____ Deer (archery)

_____ Turkey (spring 2003)

_____ Doves

_____ Deer (firearm)

_____ Turkey (fall 2003)

_____ Furbearers

_____ Deer (muzzleloader)

_____ Small Game (pheasant, rabbit, etc.) -

_____ Ducks

_____ Other (Please identify): _____

8. How many years have you hunted in Illinois? Please check one response.

_____ 1 year _____ 2-5 years _____ 6-10 years _____ more than 10
years

9. Which of the following describes how often you hunt? Choose one.

_____ every year _____ most years _____ some but not most years

9a. If you don't hunt every year, do you buy an Illinois hunting license each year?

_____ Yes _____ No

10. How did your hunting effort in 2003-04 compare to the **first year you hunted**?

_____ Increased (Go to **Question 11**)

_____ Stayed the same (Go to **Question 13**)

_____ Decreased (Go to **Question 12**)

11. If your total hunting effort **increased since the first year you hunted**, what was the reason? (please check all that apply)

_____ more free time _____ more game to hunt

_____ new equipment _____ hunting partners

_____ involved in new type of hunting _____ availability of land

_____ other (please identify): _____

12. If your total hunting effort **decreased since the first year you hunted**, what was the reason? (please check all that apply)

_____ lack of time _____ lack of interest

_____ lack of money _____ no one to hunt with

_____ other sports or recreation _____ seasons too short

_____ no land to hunt on _____ not enough game

_____ school responsibilities _____ too much equipment needed

_____ other (please identify): _____

13. Which of the following describes the people you **usually hunt with now**? Check all that apply.

_____ family members _____ friends of mine

_____ friends of the family _____ I usually hunt alone

Section 2. Hunting Experience. Please answer the following questions about your past hunting experiences.

1. Do other members of your family hunt? _____ Yes _____ No (Please go to Question 2)

1a. If "Yes," what other members in your family hunt? Please check all that apply.

_____ father _____ mother _____ spouse _____ grandparent
_____ uncle/aunt _____ brother/sister _____ cousin

2. Who took you hunting your first time? Please check all that apply.

_____ father _____ mother _____ grandparent
_____ uncle/aunt _____ brother/sister _____ friend of family
_____ friend of mine _____ other

3. How old were you the first time you went hunting? _____ years old

4. In your **first year** of hunting, what game species did you hunt?

_____ Geese _____ Deer (archery) _____ Turkey (spring)
_____ Doves _____ Deer (firearm) _____ Turkey (fall)
_____ Furbearers _____ Deer (muzzleloader) _____ Small Game (pheasant, rabbit, etc.)
_____ Ducks _____ Other (Please identify): _____

5. Which of the following species did you harvest in Illinois in your **first year** hunting?

Please check all that apply.

_____ Geese _____ Deer (archery) _____ Turkey (spring)
_____ Doves _____ Deer (firearm) _____ Turkey (fall)
_____ Furbearers _____ Deer (muzzleloader) _____ Small Game (pheasant, rabbit, etc.)
_____ Ducks _____ Other (Please identify): _____

6. Which of the following species have you harvested in Illinois **since your first year** hunting?

Please check all that apply.

_____ Geese _____ Deer (archery) _____ Turkey (spring)
_____ Doves _____ Deer (firearm) _____ Turkey (fall)
_____ Furbearers _____ Deer (muzzleloader) _____ Small Game (pheasant, rabbit, etc.)
_____ Ducks _____ Other (Please identify): _____

7. Have you ever attended a state sponsored youth hunt (special hunt for hunters under 16 years of age).

_____ Yes (please answer **Questions 7a**)

_____ No (please go to **Section 3**)

7a. If "Yes," what game species did you hunt? Please check all that apply.

_____ turkeys _____ dove _____ waterfowl (ducks, geese, and/or coots)

_____ deer _____ pheasants

7b. What game species did you harvest? Please check all that apply.

_____ turkeys _____ dove _____ waterfowl (ducks, geese, and/or coots)

_____ deer _____ pheasants

7c. Who accompanied you hunting on the youth hunt? Please check all that apply.

_____ father _____ mother _____ grandparent

_____ uncle/aunt _____ brother/sister _____ friend of family

_____ friend of mine _____ other

Section 3. Background Information. The following questions are important to help us understand more about the people involved in hunting in Illinois. Please tell us something about yourself by checking the responses that apply. All responses will be kept confidential.

1. How many years have you hunted in Illinois? _____ Years

2. What is your gender? _____ Male _____ Female

3. Please give your age. _____ years

4. What is your county of residence? _____

5. Do you or any member of your household subscribe to hunting magazines?

_____ Yes _____ No

6. Do you belong to any national conservation organizations (Ducks Unlimited, National Wild Turkey Federation, Pheasants Forever, etc.)?

_____ Yes Which ones? _____

_____ No

In your own words, please briefly explain what you **like best** about hunting:

In your own words, please briefly explain what you **like least** about hunting:



**RETURN ENVELOPE IS PROVIDED – POSTAGE-PAID
THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND ASSISTANCE!**

Your input will help us understand more about hunters and hunting in Illinois.

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources receives federal assistance and therefore must comply with federal anti-discrimination laws. In compliance with the Illinois Human Rights Act, the Illinois Constitution, Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act as amended, and the U.S. Constitution, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, or disability. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility, please contact the Equal Employment Opportunity Officer, Department of Natural Resources, 524 S. Second St., Springfield, IL 62701-1787, (217) 782-7616 or the Officer of Human Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C. 20240.

Appendix E. Background information as reported by respondents to the 2003-2004 Illinois Youth Hunter Survey.

How many years have you hunted in Illinois ($n = 105$)?

Mean	5.5 years
Range	1-13 years

What is your gender ($n = 116$)?

Male	88%
Female	12

Please give your age ($n = 112$).

Mean	17 years
Range	10-22 years

Do you or any member of your household subscribe to hunting magazines ($n = 116$)?

Yes	75%
No	25

Do you belong to any environmental or conservation organizations ($n = 116$)?

Yes	40%
No	60

If 'yes' which ones ($n = 47$)?

Ducks Unlimited	55%
National Rifle Association	2
Pheasants Forever	19
Quail Unlimited	4
Whitetails Unlimited	6
North American Hunting Club	2
National Wild Turkey Federation	49
IFOR	2
Int. Blackpowder Hunting Assoc.	2
Local Sportsmans/Hunting Clubs	4

Appendix F. Number of youth hunters by county of residence as reported by respondents of the 2003-2004 Illinois Youth Hunter Survey.

County	Number of Residents	County	Number of Residents	County	Number of Residents
Adams	1	Hardin	0	Morgan	2
Alexander	0	Henderson	0	Moultrie	0
Bond	0	Henry	0	Ogle	2
Boone	0	Iroquois	1	Peoria	7
Brown	1	Jackson	1	Perry	0
Bureau	2	Jasper	0	Piatt	0
Calhoun	0	Jefferson	0	Pike	1
Carroll	0	Jersey	0	Pope	0
Cass	0	Jo Daviess	0	Pulaski	0
Champaign	2	Johnson	1	Putnam	1
Christian	4	Kane	1	Randolph	2
Clark	0	Kankakee	1	Richland	0
Clay	0	Kendall	1	Rock Island	1
Clinton	3	Knox	2	St. Clair	4
Coles	0	Lake	4	Saline	0
Cook	10	LaSalle	1	Sangamon	4
Crawford	0	Lawrence	0	Schuyler	0
Cumberland	1	Lee	0	Scott	0
De Kalb	2	Livingston	1	Shelby	0
De Witt	0	Logan	0	Stark	1
Douglas	0	McDonough	0	Stephenson	1
Du Page	2	McHenry	2	Tazewell	4
Edgar	0	McLean	3	Union	0
Edwards	0	Macon	2	Vermilion	0
Effingham	1	Macoupin	2	Wabash	1
Fayette	2	Madison	6	Warren	1
Ford	0	Marion	0	Washington	1
Franklin	1	Marshall	0	Wayne	0
Fulton	3	Mason	1	White	0
Gallatin	0	Massac	0	Whiteside	0
Greene	1	Menard	3	Will	2
Grundy	0	Mercer	1	Williamson	1
Hamilton	0	Monroe	2	Winnebago	3
Hancock	0	Montgomery	2	Woodford	3

