

**FINAL REPORT**  
**SCIENCE-DRIVEN HUNTER RECRUITMENT**  
**FEDERAL AID IN WILDLIFE RESTORATION ACT**

**FEDERAL AID PROJECT NO. W-188-R-2**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In an effort to identify, prioritize, and refine current research needs; a cooperative partnership between the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and the Illinois Natural History Survey at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) developed the Illinois Learn to Hunt (LtH) program, federally funded by the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act. LtH provides a comprehensive, hands-on, educational experience for the adult public to learn why, how, when, and where to hunt wild game in Illinois.

To navigate social distancing guidelines, program staff shifted outreach efforts to virtual learning opportunities. This focus included refining existing e-learning modules and developing curricula and materials for webinars. The program hosted 42 webinars totaling 1,460 participants and 3,704 viewings during this grant segment. The e-learning modules developed by the program were attempted 650 times by participants during this grant segment. All participants were distributed surveys to assess the efficacy of the program offerings and to investigate constraints and motivations to hunting in Illinois. Additionally, to develop a mitigation strategy aimed at hunter retention and reengagement, we mailed a 4-page self-administered questionnaire to random sample of 3,000 hunters to query their hunting activities, motivations, constraints, and attitudes.

One major theme that continued to present itself is the significance of prior hunting experience and its influence on motivations, constraints, and species interest. Simply put, a singular strategy for communication efforts, R3 programming or programmatic support is not effective. A segmented and targeted approach is needed. While many other themes presented themselves during this study, the LtH program has developed 6 strategic objectives, based on the findings of this study, to drive and guide LtH efforts to meet statewide R3 objectives.

## **OUTREACH EVENTS**

In accordance with state restrictions, university restrictions, and CDC guidance, all scheduled in-person events for the program were cancelled and new events were postponed ensuring the safety of the Illinois public, participants, and staff. To navigate social distancing guidelines, program staff developed curriculums and materials for web-based learning opportunities (e.g., webinars). During 2021, the program developed curricula for 30 distinct webinars. The program hosted 43 webinars totaling 1,416 participants, an average of 33 participants per webinar. As many registrants indicated they cannot attend live webinars due to time constraints, each registrant was provided a recording of the webinar. Webinars were viewed an additional 2,238 times through recordings, totaling 3,704 total viewings (live attendees and recordings), an average of 85 viewings per webinar.

## Upland Game Events (Deer/Turkey/Small Game)

The program hosted 25 webinars aimed at deer, turkey, or small game hunting, and received 1,993 registrations for these events (Table 1). A total of 950 individuals attended the live webinars. As many registrants have indicated that they cannot attend live webinars due to time constraints, each registrant was provided a recording of the webinar. Webinar recordings were viewed an additional 1,473 times.

Table 1: Registration, attendance, and recording views of LtH upland game events.

Event Date	Event Title	Registrations	Attendance	Recording Views	Total Viewings
7/28/20	Deer Stand Placement Techniques	125	74	108	182
7/30/20	Small Game hunting 101	68	23	50	73
8/27/20	Deer Hunting 101	47	16	33	49
8/31/20	Small Game Hunting 101	58	16	21	37
9/8/20	Deer Hunting 101	96	41	33	74
9/10/20	Deer Hunting 102	135	62	80	142
9/22/20	Deer Scouting Techniques	131	54	87	141
10/20/20	Upland Hunting 101	93	57	26	83
10/22/20	Deer Stand Placement Strategies	83	41	41	82
10/27/20	Upland Hunting 102	112	42	35	77
12/8/20	Squirrel and Rabbit Hunting 101	67	37	17	54
12/15/20	Late-season Deer Hunting Strategies	84	46	13	59
1/19/21	Squirrel and Rabbit Hunting 101	96	49	23	72
1/26/21	Turkey Hunting 101	156	82	69	151
1/28/21	Turkey Hunting 102	150	62	70	132
2/11/21	Turkey Calling 101	57	29	108	137
2/16/21	Turkey Hunting 101	55	23	155	178
2/18/21	Turkey Hunting 102	63	20	92	112
2/25/21	Turkey Hunting Q&A	48	11	113	124
3/23/21	Turkey Calling 101	38	20	107	127
3/31/21	Deer Hunting 101	65	27	17	44
4/13/21	Deer Hunting 101	25	17	80	97
4/15/21	Deer Hunting 102	39	25	33	58
4/20/21	Deer Stand Placement Strategies	63	50	41	91
4/22/21	Deer Firearm and Muzzleloader Equipment Overview	39	26	21	47
<b>Totals</b>		<b>1,993</b>	<b>950</b>	<b>1,473</b>	<b>2,423</b>

## Specialty Events

The program hosted 14 specialty events directed at lapsed and current hunters and received 870 registrations for these events (Table 2). A total of 388 individuals attended the live webinars. Webinar recordings were viewed an additional 681 times.

Table 2: Registration, attendance, and recording views of LtH specialty events.

<b>Event Date</b>	<b>Event Title</b>	<b>Registrations</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Recording Views</b>	<b>Total Viewings</b>
7/23/20	Plant ID for IL Hunters (woody plants)	80	41	72	113
8/23/20	Plant ID for IL Hunters (woody plants)	60	24	31	55
9/15/20	Plant ID for IL Hunters (herbaceous plants)	124	37	22	59
10/15/20	Wild Game Food Safety	22	14	11	25
11/5/20	Bird Dog 101	105	34	33	67
2/3/21	Wild Game Utilization	66	17	11	28
2/23/21	Shed Hunting Overview	100	73	233	306
3/2/21	Shotgun Overview for Hunters	90	31	49	80
3/17/21	St. Patty's Day Lunch Special	12	6	31	37
3/18/21	Plant ID for IL Hunters (woody plants)	55	31	52	83
3/25/21	Archery Equipment Overview and Buying Guide	49	19	66	85
5/5/21	Habitat Management for IL Hunters	51	27	16	43
5/6/21	Hunter Etiquette and Ethics	28	20	23	43
5/27/21	Wild Game: Hunt to Cook	28	14	31	45
<b>Totals</b>		<b>870</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>681</b>	<b>1,069</b>

### Waterfowl Events (Duck/Goose)

The program hosted 4 webinars aimed at waterfowl hunting and received 248 registrations for these events (Table 3). A total of 128 individuals attended the live webinars. Webinar recordings were viewed an additional 84 times.

Table 3: Registration, attendance, and recording views of LtH waterfowl events.

<b>Event Date</b>	<b>Event Title</b>	<b>Registrations</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Recording Views</b>	<b>Total Viewings</b>
9/26/20	Waterfowl Identification 101	65	34	28	62
9/29/20	Waterfowl Hunting 101	60	29	20	49
12/17/20	Waterfowl Hunting 101	61	35	20	55
1/21/21	Goose Hunting 102	62	30	16	46
<b>Totals</b>		<b>248</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>212</b>

## REGISTRANT ANALYSIS

Individuals interested in attending a LtH event are required to pre-register through the program website. This process allows staff to collect demographic information, hunting experience, species interested in hunting, and how the registrant became aware of the event. To gain a better understanding of those individuals interested in LtH program events, all event registrants (including non-attendees and cancellations) were included in this analysis. The LtH program received 3,170 registrations from 1,124 individuals during this grant segment. Previous studies have shown that participation in hunting increases when participants engage in several events, rather than a single instance (Seng et al, 2007). LtH participants registered for an average of 2.8 events during this grant segment.

Of the 3,170 registrations received during this grant segment, the majority were between ages 25-34 (30%) and 35-44 (33%) years old (Figure 1).

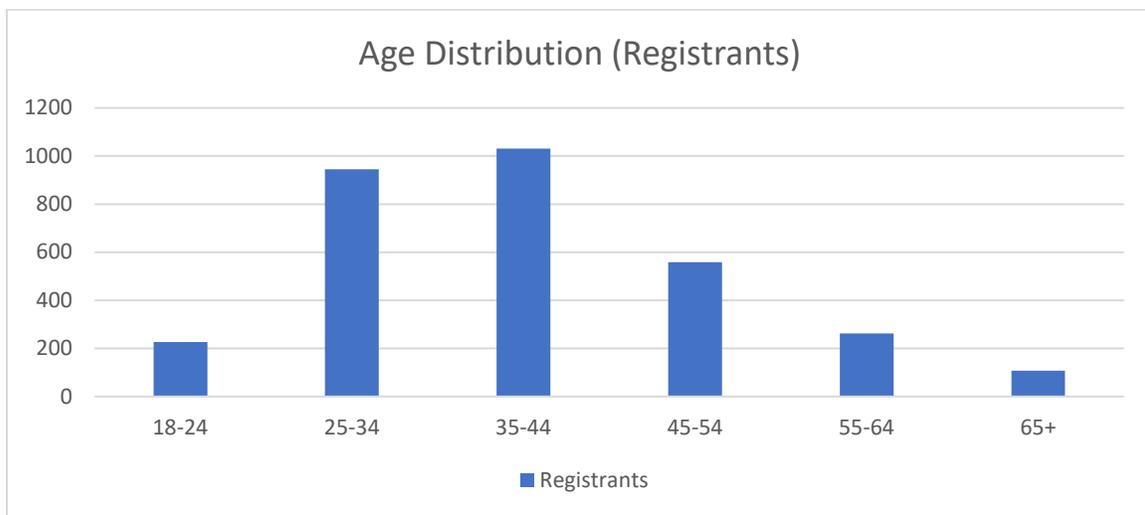


Figure 1: Age distribution of all registrations for LtH program events during this grant segment.

Of the 3,170 registrants, 27% indicated no hunting experience prior to registration. Of those who have previously hunted (n= 2,325), white-tailed deer was the species hunted most often (79%), followed by small game (53%), upland bird (51%), turkey (46%), and waterfowl (34%). The majority of registrants (68.4%) for whom it is required have previously obtained hunter safety certification.

To further understand species interest, registrants were categorized into three distinct age groups: younger, 18-34 years (n=1,172), middle-aged, 35-54 years, (n=1,590), and older, 55+ years (n=372) (Table 4). Younger registrants were significantly more likely to have no prior hunting experience (31%) than middle-aged (26%) and older registrants (13%;  $\chi^2 = 48.338$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

Table 4: Species previously hunted by LtH event registrants.

<b>Species</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>No hunting experience</b>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>26.6%</b>
	18-34 Years	31.4%
	35-54 Years	26.2%
	55+ Years	13.2%
	$\chi^2 = 48.338$ ***	
<b>Deer</b>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>57.9%</b>
	18-34 Years	52.7%
	35-54 Years	59.5%
	55+ Years	66.9%
	$\chi^2 = 27.098$ ***	
<b>Turkey</b>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>33.7%</b>
	18-34 Years	27.6%
	35-54 Years	37.5%
	55+ Years	36.8%
	$\chi^2 = 31.586$ ***	
<b>Upland Bird</b>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>38.0%</b>
	18-34 Years	28.9%
	35-54 Years	40.3%
	55+ Years	57.0%
	$\chi^2 = 101.107$ ***	
<b>Small Game</b>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>39.0%</b>
	18-34 Years	34.1%
	35-54 Years	38.9%
	55+ Years	54.8%
	$\chi^2 = 51.147$ ***	
<b>Waterfowl</b>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>25.6%</b>
	18-34 Years	21.0%
	35-54 Years	29.0%
	55+ Years	25.5%
	$\chi^2 = 22.825$ ***	

\*p < 0.05, \*\*p < 0.01, \*\*\*p < 0.001

Registrants come from throughout Illinois, but the majority live in Chicago or the surrounding suburbs (Figures 2 & 3). The program also received 68 registrations from individuals not residing in Illinois (Figure 4).

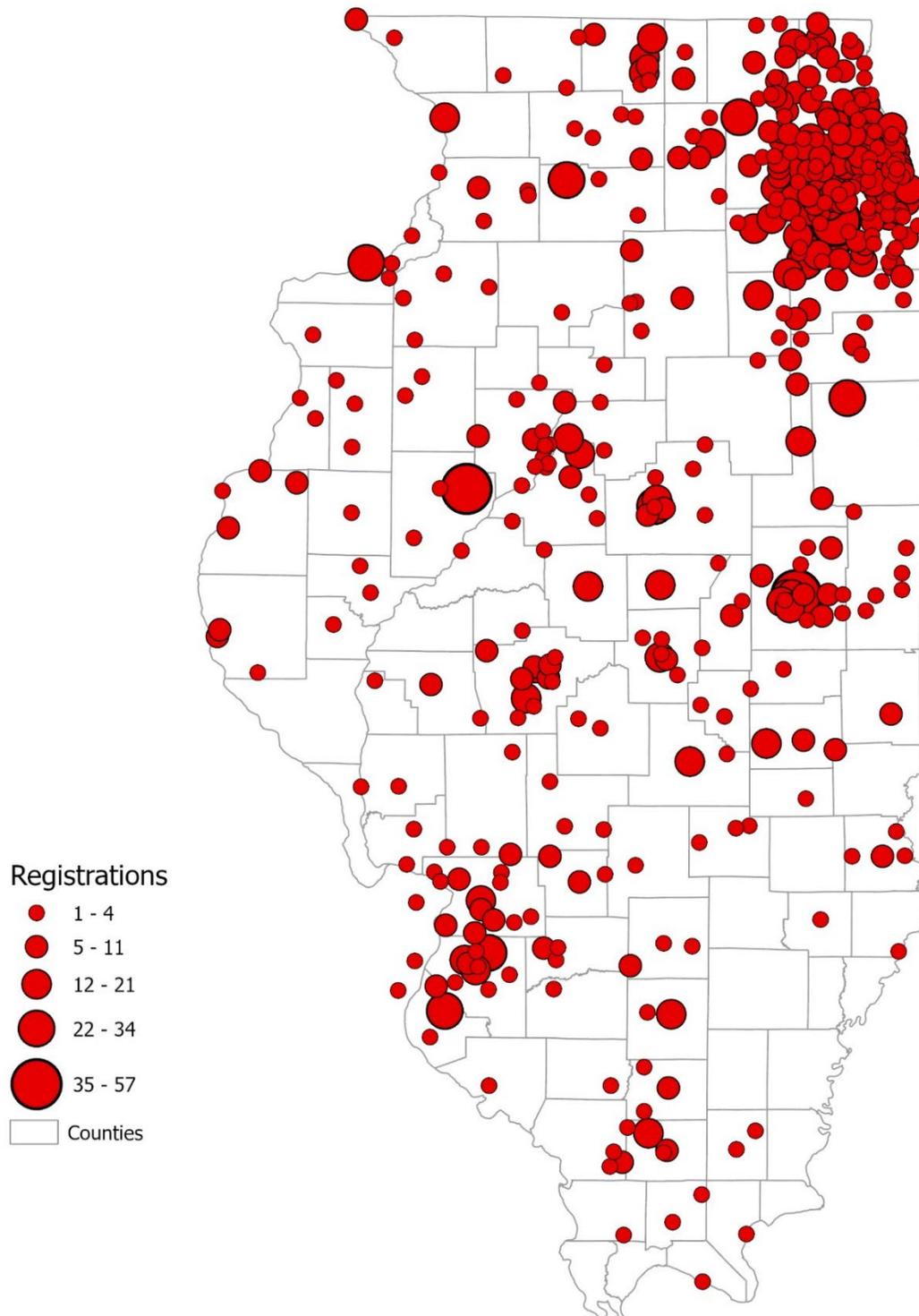


Figure 2: Illinois spatial distribution among LtH registrants by Zip Code provided by registrants during the registration process.

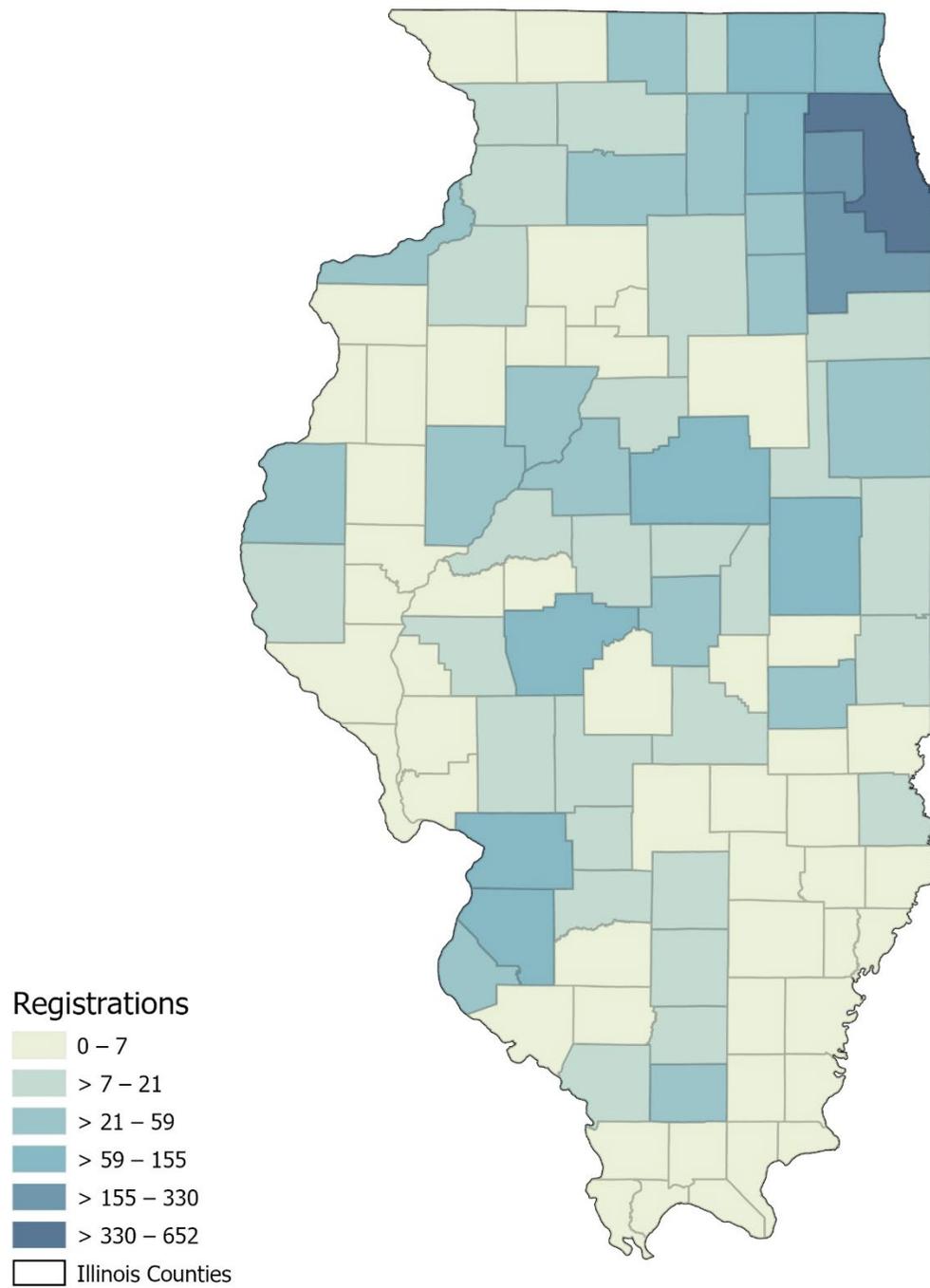


Figure 3: County distribution among LtH registrants.

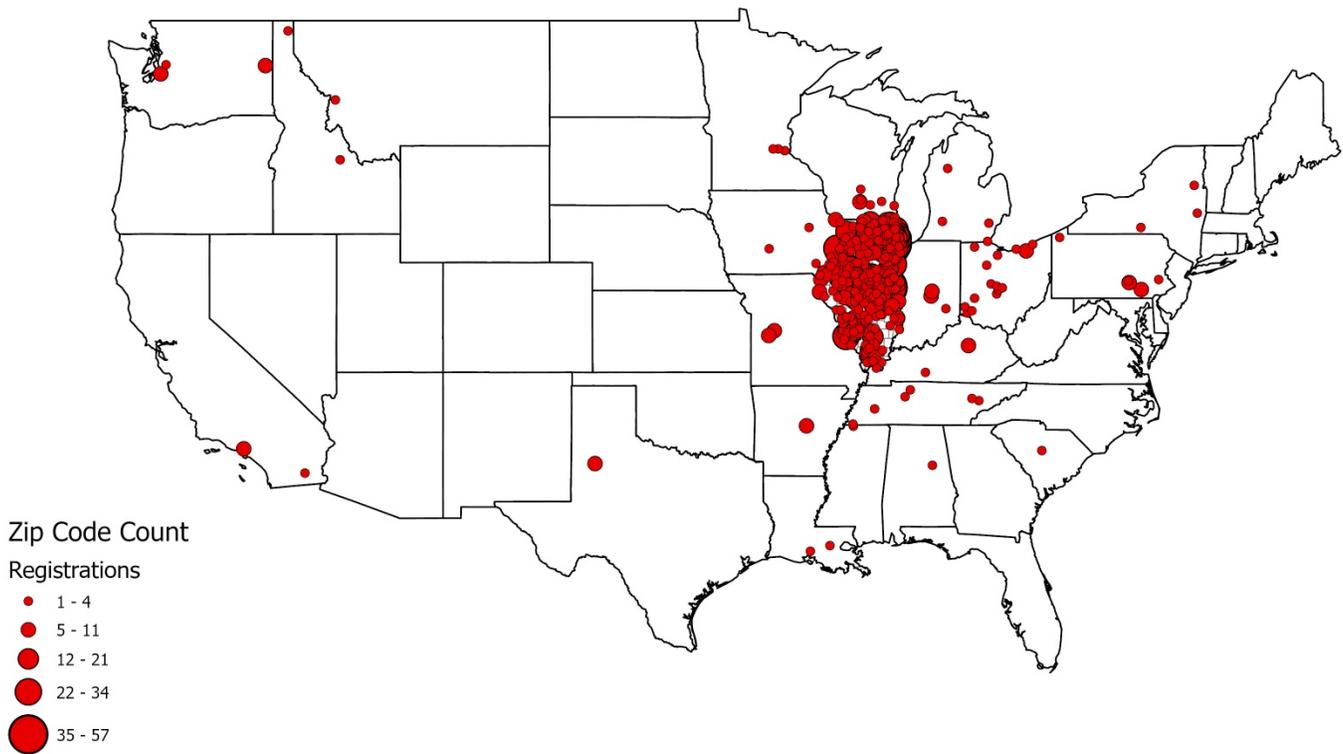


Figure 4: U.S. spatial distribution among LtH registrants by Zip Code provided by registrants during the registration process.

Registrants were asked to indicate how they discovered the LtH event they are registering for (Table 5). To further understand the various acquisition channels, program staff analyzed acquisition channels by distinct age groups (Table 5). On average, older registrants (55+ years) are significantly more likely to discover program events through the LtH Program Newsletter (13.7%;  $\chi^2 = 10.852$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ), while middle-aged registrants are highest through Facebook (53.6%;  $\chi^2 = 51.832$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ).

Table 5: Acquisition channel by age group among event registrants.

Acquisition Channel	Group	%
<b>Facebook</b>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>48.1%</b>
	18-34 Years	44.8%
	35-54 Years	53.6%
	55+ Years	34.7%
	$\chi^2 = 51.832$ ***	
<b>Learn to Hunt Program Newsletter</b>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>9.2%</b>
	18-34 Years	8.9%
	35-54 Years	8.3%
	55+ Years	13.7%
	$\chi^2 = 10.852$ **	
<b>Illinois DNR Website</b>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>14.0%</b>
	18-34 Years	18.0%
	35-54 Years	10.3%
	55+ Years	17.2%
	$\chi^2 = 37.321$ ***	
<b>Online Search</b>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>8.8%</b>
	18-34 Years	8.8%
	35-54 Years	9.6%
	55+ Years	9.1%
	$\chi^2 = 1.929$	
<b>Word of Mouth</b>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>4.5%</b>
	18-34 Years	4.5%
	35-54 Years	4.0%
	55+ Years	6.7%
	$\chi^2 = 5.025$	
<b>Instagram</b>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>1.9%</b>
	18-34 Years	2.2%
	35-54 Years	2.0%
	55+ Years	0.5%
	$\chi^2 = 4.286$	

\*p < 0.05, \*\*p < 0.01, \*\*\*p < 0.001

Table 5 continued: Acquisition channel by age group among event registrants.

<b>Acquisition Channel</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Flyer</b>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.5%</b>
	18-34 Years	2.9%
	35-54 Years	3.9%
	55+ Years	4.0%
	$\chi^2 = 2.261$	
<b>News Article</b>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>1.3%</b>
	18-34 Years	0.9%
	35-54 Years	1.3%
	55+ Years	2.4%
	$\chi^2 = 4.902$	
<b>Other</b>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>7.0%</b>
	18-34 Years	7.5%
	35-54 Years	5.9%
	55+ Years	10.2%
	$\chi^2 = 9.564^{**}$	

\*p < 0.05, \*\*p < 0.01, \*\*\*p < 0.001

Registrants were asked to indicate what species of game they are interested in hunting. The majority of registrants indicated interest in hunting deer (73%) (Table 6).

Table 6: Species interest among LtH program registrants.

<b>Game Species</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Deer</b>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>73.8%</b>
	18-34 Years	75.6%
	35-54 Years	73.5%
	55+ Years	69.6%
	$\chi^2 = 5.308$	
<b>Turkey</b>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>69.7%</b>
	18-34 Years	70.9%
	35-54 Years	69.3%
	55+ Years	68.0%
	$\chi^2 = 1.462$	
<b>Upland Bird</b>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>59.3%</b>
	18-34 Years	59.5%
	35-54 Years	60.2%
	55+ Years	56.2%
	$\chi^2 = 1.995$	
<b>Small Game (e.g., squirrel, rabbit)</b>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>57.8%</b>
	18-34 Years	61.7%
	35-54 Years	56.3%
	55+ Years	51.6%
	$\chi^2 = 14.685$ ***	
<b>Waterfowl</b>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>52.4%</b>
	18-34 Years	58.2%
	35-54 Years	50.2%
	55+ Years	44.6%
	$\chi^2 = 27.649$ ***	

\*p < 0.05, \*\*p < 0.01, \*\*\*p < 0.001

## POST-EVENT SURVEYS

### Methods

Program events are designed to be an introduction into Illinois hunting. These events focus on hunters as conservationists, game ecology, applicable rules and regulations, scouting and hunting tactics, equipment overview, firearm/archery safety, ethics, and other pertinent information. Curricula were developed and presented in 30 webinars. Webinars ranged from beginner-level information, noted with a 101, to more advanced and specialized webinars. Zoom.com (Zoom, 2020 site licensed through the University of Illinois) was used as the platform to host the webinars.

Participants who attended an Lth event were provided a web-based follow-up survey to assess program efficacy, behavior, and attitudes in respect to hunting in Illinois (Appendix 2). The survey was developed in Qualtrics (Qualtrics, 2020) and administered to participants via the email address provided during registration. Data were coded, entered, and analyzed using SPSS 27.0 (SPSS Inc., 2020).

### Results

#### *Event Satisfaction*

Most respondents indicated that they were extremely satisfied (49.3%) or that the event exceed their expectations (43.5%) (Table 7).

Table 7: Event satisfaction reported via post-event questionnaire (n=209).

<b>Satisfaction</b>	<b>Participants %</b>
I was not Satisfied	0.0
Under Satisfied	0.5
Satisfied	6.7
Very Satisfied	49.3
Exceeded Expectations	43.5

#### *Background Information*

On average, respondents were between 30 – 49 years old (Figure 5) and 86% of respondents were male (Figure 6).

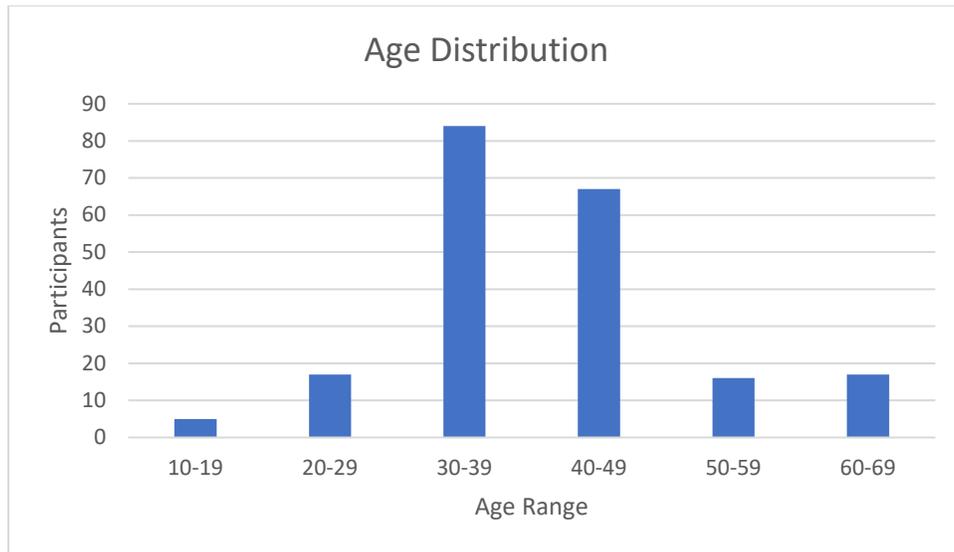


Figure 5: Age distribution of post-event questionnaire respondents (n=206).

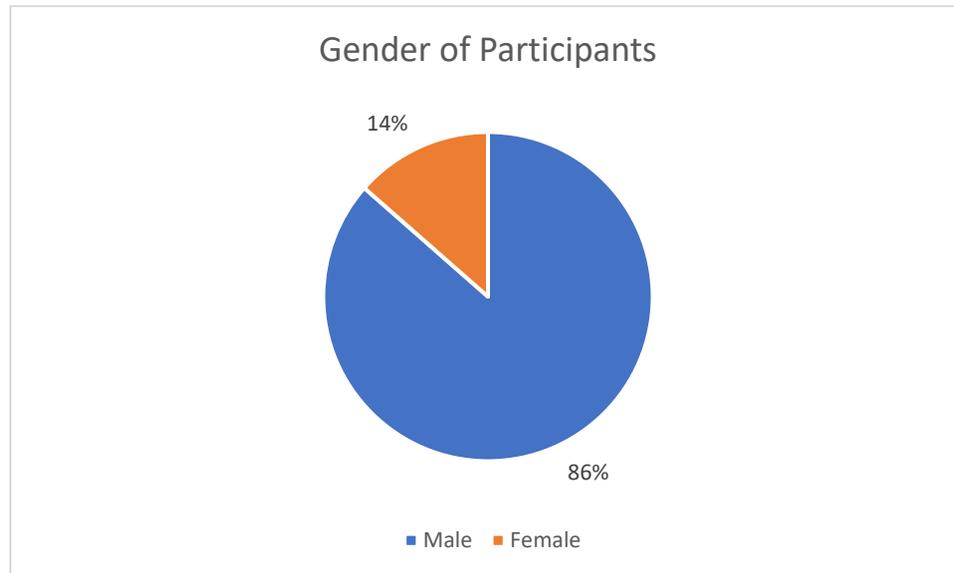


Figure 6: Gender of post-event questionnaire respondents (n=207).

The majority of respondents (71.9%) have children, with two children being the most frequently reported number (34.7%) (Table 8). Most respondents reported a gross household income over \$61,000 (81.7%) (Table 9). During 2020, the reported annual median household income for Illinois residents was \$65,886 (U.S. Census, 2020).

Table 8: Child dependency (n=199).

<b>Child Dependency</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
<b>0</b>	28.1%
<b>1</b>	11.1%
<b>2</b>	34.7%
<b>3</b>	17.1%
<b>4+</b>	9.1%

Table 9: Gross household income (n=189).

<b>Gross Household income</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>&lt;40K</b>	7.9%
<b>41-60K</b>	10.6%
<b>61-80K</b>	19.1%
<b>81-100K</b>	21.2%
<b>101K+</b>	41.3%

The majority (84%) of respondents indicate using public land in Illinois (Table 10). Of those who made use of public land, most used it for hiking (74%), fishing (72%), camping (64%), and boating (33%).

Table 10: Public land usage by post-event questionnaire respondents (n=207).

<b>Utilizing of Illinois Public Land</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Never</b>	16.0%
<b>Rarely</b>	14.5%
<b>Sometimes</b>	20.1%
<b>Often</b>	48.8%

The majority (93%) of respondents were Illinois residents. Of Illinois residents, the majority (73.7%) indicate that they plan on living in Illinois for the next 5 years (Table 11).

Table 11: Planned Illinois residency status for post-event questionnaire respondents (n=190).

<b>Illinois Resident for Next 5 Years</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Yes</b>	73.7%
<b>No</b>	4.7%
<b>I don't know</b>	21.6%

### *Hunting Experience*

Most respondents (97%) indicated that they have previously shot a firearm and/or shot a compound bow (65%) prior to taking in an LtH event; however, crossbows were used least of all options (47%) (n=209). Respondents were asked if they have ever accompanied someone hunting, but not hunted themselves. Less than half of respondents (41%) have accompanied someone else hunting (n=199).

The majority of respondents indicated that they have been interested in hunting for longer than 5 years (Table 12).

Table 12: Length of interest in hunting as indicated by post-event questionnaire respondents (n=209).

<b>Years Interested</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Less than a year</b>	3.9%
<b>1 year</b>	7.2%
<b>2 years</b>	10.6%
<b>3 years</b>	6.8%
<b>4 years</b>	3.4%
<b>5 years+</b>	68.1%

Most respondents (95.2%) indicated that they have previously consumed wild game (n=208).

## E-LEARNING MODULES

During this grant segment, the LtH program continually refined previously developed e-learning modules. Modules are designed to give an overview of hunting regulations, safety, hunting strategies, and wildlife ecology.

### Methods

E-learning modules were developed to provide additional learning opportunities to the Illinois public in respect to hunting. Modules were developed through EasyLMS and hosted on the program website.

### Results

These modules were attempted 650 times by participants (Table 13).

Table 13: E-learning module attempts during this grant segment.

<b>Module</b>	<b>Attempts</b>
<b>Deer Hunting 101</b>	299
<b>Turkey Hunting 101</b>	120
<b>Waterfowl Hunting 101</b>	122
<b>Upland Hunting 101</b>	109

Additionally, new analytical capabilities were added to the modules to further understand how much of the module is completed by each user (Tables 14 - 17).

Table 14: Deer Hunting 101 e-learning module completion rates.

<b>% Completion</b>	<b>Users</b>	<b>% of Users</b>
<b>1-25%</b>	99	21.4%
<b>26-50%</b>	41	9.9%
<b>51-75%</b>	35	16.5%
<b>76-100%</b>	124	52.1%

Table 15: Turkey Hunting 101 e-learning module completion rates.

<b>% Completion</b>	<b>Users</b>	<b>% of Users</b>
<b>1-25%</b>	52	13.3%
<b>26-50%</b>	11	12.2%
<b>51-75%</b>	9	33.2%

<b>76-100%</b>	48	41.3%
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Table 16: Waterfowl Hunting 101 e-learning module completion rates.

<b>% Completion</b>	<b>Users</b>	<b>% of Users</b>
<b>1-25%</b>	51	24.6%
<b>26-50%</b>	21	13.8%
<b>51-75%</b>	10	25.6%
<b>76-100%</b>	40	35.9%

Table 17: Upland Hunting 101 e-learning module completion rates.

<b>% Completion</b>	<b>Users</b>	<b>% of Users</b>
<b>1-25%</b>	42	20.9%
<b>26-50%</b>	22	18.4%
<b>51-75%</b>	8	11.0%
<b>76-100%</b>	37	49.7%

Whereas overall module-use trended down from the previous year, LtH staff expected this user reduction. Historically, LtH outreach events were conducted only through in-person events and e-learning modules. However, since Covid restrictions required staff to conduct all outreach events virtually, individuals with time and travel constraints could attend virtual webinars, therefore reducing their reliance on e-learning modules.

## **CONTENT CREATION**

Content creation has become the go-to communication strategy for marketers and communicators in the internet age. Content generated by program staff not only provides the Illinois public with information relevant to their interests, but also increases a website’s ranking through various search engines leading to more referral traffic and, subsequently, more interest in program offerings. This is not only important to recruitment, but also to retention because social support is needed for someone to begin to think of themselves as a hunter rather than as someone who has gone hunting (Ryan & Shaw, 2011; Wentz & Seng, 2000).

Developing content and other learning opportunities that help hunters transition through this phase is an important step in the recruitment process. These individuals have learned the basics of game species ecology, regulations, equipment, firearm/archery safety, hunting techniques and are now ready to take the next step.

Relevant and informational content can keep new hunters interested, educate the public, foster growth and skill development, and provide *some* level of support for hunters as they transition through the ORAM model.

### *Video Creation*

Program staff have begun developing videos aimed at teaching hunting specifics, regulations, or strategies. Program staff developed 5 current video series with several videos in each series:

#### Question and Answer with Wildlife Professionals – 1,257 viewings

This video series is designed to connect the Illinois public and Illinois hunters to wildlife professionals working on a variety of projects. The public was urged to submit questions related to the program, habitat, or wildlife species that the professional is experienced with. Submitted questions were presented to the professional in a Q&A format.

1. Jared Duquette, Hunter Heritage Program Manager, Illinois DNR
2. Luke Garver, Wild Turkey Program Manager, Illinois DNR
3. Randy Smith, Wetland Wildlife Program Manager, Illinois DNR
4. Bob Caveny, Agricultural and Grassland Wildlife Program Manager, Illinois DNR
5. Peter Schlichting, Deer Program Manager, Illinois DNR
6. Sgt. Stuart Fraser, Illinois Conservation Police, Illinois DNR
7. Dr. Holly Tuten, Vector Ecologist, Illinois Natural History Survey

#### Ask a Deer Processor – 3,004 viewings

These videos are designed to educate the Illinois public and to present information aimed at ensuring wholesome and safe processing. These videos highlight common mistakes that processors see and what steps hunters can take to mitigate these issues and increase the hunter's meat yield.

1. Importance of Field Dressing
2. Leaving a Deer Overnight
3. How long should I hang a deer before processing?
4. Should I remove the tarsal glands off a buck before processing?

#### Research Highlights – 443 viewings

This series educates the Illinois public and hunters ongoing Illinois research that may be of interest into them. These videos bring in experts to discuss their ongoing research projects, and how their research will benefit wildlife, habitat, the Illinois public, and Illinois hunters.

1. Wood Duck research in Illinois – Forbes Biological Station, Illinois Natural History Survey

2. Purpose overview and history of Waterfowl Banding – Forbes Biological Station, Illinois Natural History Survey
3. Tick Species Abundance, Tickborne Illnesses, and Tick Prevention Strategies – Dr. Holly Tuten, Illinois Natural History Survey

### Upland Hunting Series – 562 viewings

This series is designed to promote skill development in upland hunting.

1. Playing the Wind
2. Flushing Strategies for Upland Hunting
3. Ready the Body Language of Pointing Breeds

### Choosing the Proper Ammunition – 205 viewings

Videos are designed to provide information on selecting the proper ammunition for a desired species and/or hunt type and the pros and cons of different ammunition types or sizes.

1. Understanding Shotgun Shell Metrics
2. Comparison of Shotgun Slug Types

### *Infographics*

#### Season Reminders

Program staff have developed a series of infographics (Appendix 4) that remind the Illinois public about upcoming application deadlines, season dates, and other timely reminders. Application reminders, on average, reached 18,000 individuals per infographic and received 500+ clicks to the Illinois DNR website through the program's Facebook postings. The application shared most often was a reminder (firearm deer season) that reached 40,000 individuals, received 200 shares, and generated roughly 900 clicks to the Illinois DNR's website. These reminders serve an important service to LtH participants and the Illinois public.

#### Educational Infographics

Program staff have developed a series of infographics (Appendix 3) that aim to educate the Illinois public about a specific topic. Program staff has a collection of 19 educational infographics that were developed by program staff and are shared through various distribution channels. Program staff developed several new infographics this year (denoted with an \*).

1. Illinois Hunters are Conservationists
2. Eat Healthy. Eat Local. Hunt Illinois.
3. North American Model of Wildlife Conservation

4. The Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp
5. What's Illinois Waterfowl Worth?
6. Venison Cuts and Uses
7. Reduce Your Carbon Footprint. Hunt Illinois.
8. How to Field Dress Deer
9. How to Scout for White-tailed Deer on Public Land
10. How to Scout for Wild Turkey on Public Land
11. Remote Scouting
12. Identifying Dove Species in Illinois
13. Tips for Hunting Public Land
14. How to Take Ethical Harvest Photos
15. Benefits of Getting Outdoors \*
16. Three Methods for Leading Flying Targets \*
17. Conservation Success Stories: Osprey Recovery \*
18. Non-toxic Shot. What is it important? \*
19. Morel Mushroom Overview \*

### *Written Content*

Program staff developed a blog housed on the program website to provide written content aimed at educating the Illinois public on hunting. Blog posts are shared through various social media channels and through the monthly Illinois Learn to Hunt newsletter. The blog was started to provide one written article per month. As the blog audience grows, program staff will re-evaluate the number of articles per month and make necessary additions as interest indicates.

1. Post-season Deer Scouting Strategies
2. Looking for Something to Do Mid-winter? Try Squirrel Hunting.
3. Tracking – Ancient Art for the Modern-Day Hunter
4. Shed Hunting Overview and Strategies
5. Remote Scouting: Reading and Understanding Topographic Maps
6. Tick Tock, Tick Season is Coming. What You Need to Know.
7. Modern Day Wildlife Management in North America May Be the Best Story Never Told.
8. Mourning Doves and Hunting
9. Knot to be Without – The One Knot Everyone Should Know.

Program staff also authored several articles for the Outdoor Illinois Wildlife Journal.

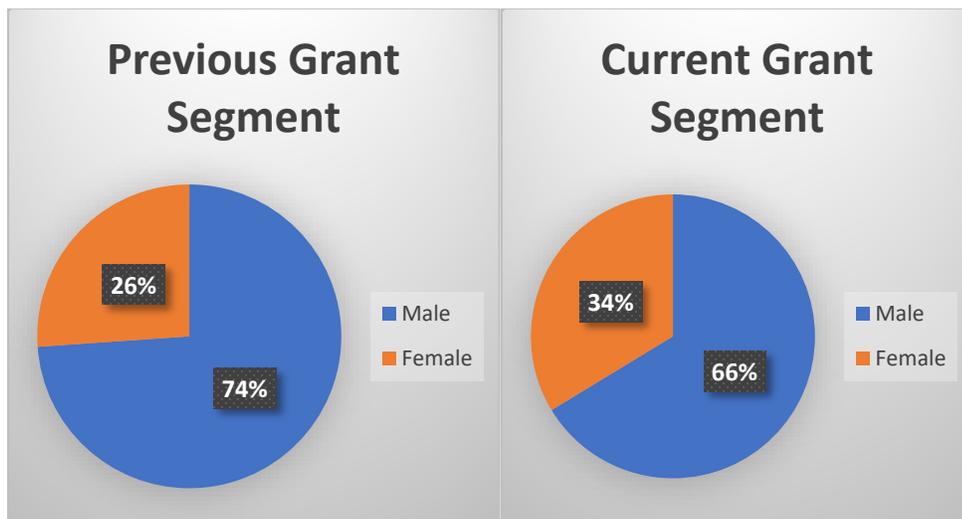
1. Plant Identification: A Skillset for Hunters?
2. Seeing Wildlife Through Soft Eyes
3. Post-season Deer Scouting is a Great Mid-winter Activity
4. Calling Strategies for Hennaed-up Spring Gobblers
5. Squirrel Hunting Opportunities in Illinois Are Abundant

## COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

### *Program Website*

The program website [www.learntohunt.il.com](http://www.learntohunt.il.com) is used as a central hub for all information regarding the program and program offerings. Additionally, the program website has a collection of various resources, both external and internal, that a new hunter may find useful as they continue their pathway to becoming a hunter. Google Analytics has been installed on the back end of the website and allows program staff to understand how the public navigates the website and which resources they find most useful. In addition to providing information about user experience and onsite content; Google Analytics provides unique datasets about the users interacting with the website both individuals and in the aggregate. Google Analytics estimates this user data by analyzing browsing history, location, and often user-submitted age and gender.

This grant segment, the program website received 8,512 users, a 75.8% increase over the previous year's website users. Additionally, the number of website sessions (number of individual website viewings) totaled 11,266 sessions, a 58.7% increase. Additionally, females make up a larger portion of website users compared to last grant segment (Figures 7 & 8).



Figures 7 & 8: Gender of program website users.

Website users are far more likely to visit the program website via organic search (using a search engine) rather than clicking a direct link or referred on social media (Table 13).

Table 18: Acquisition channels of website users and pages/session.

<b>Acquisition Channels</b>	<b>Users</b>	<b>Pages/Session</b>
<b>Organic Search</b>	3,001	1.87
<b>Social</b>	2,355	1.48
<b>Direct</b>	1,952	1.81
<b>Referral</b>	950	2.09
<b>Email</b>	471	1.45

Google Analytics data sets not only include basic demographic information but also assumptions based on a user’s search history, social media activity, and content consumption patterns. Google Analytics data is collected regardless of the users operating system, device, or browser. However, as privacy becomes a concern of the public, many individuals have the capacity to block some of these tracking efforts by using secure VPNs. This year, 30.56% of website users are not blocking Google Analytics capacity to track them in the aggregate.

Affinity audiences are broad categorizations and are often referred as individuals higher in the “purchase funnel”. Affinity targeting analyzes someone’s overall interest, passions, and lifestyle to generate a snapshot of their overall identity. The most prominent affinity audiences visiting the program website are categorized as 30-minute chefs, outdoor enthusiasts, and do-it-yourselfers (Table 14).

Table 19: Top affinity categories of LtH program website users.

<b>Affinity Audiences</b>	<b>% of users</b>
<b>Food &amp; Dining/Cooking Enthusiasts/30 Minute Chefs</b>	3.83%
<b>Lifestyles &amp; Hobbies/Outdoor Enthusiasts</b>	3.55%
<b>Home &amp; Garden/Do-It-Yourselfers</b>	3.52%
<b>Lifestyles &amp; Hobbies/Pet Lovers</b>	3.04%
<b>Shoppers/Value Shoppers</b>	3.01%
<b>Banking &amp; Finance/Avid Investors</b>	2.96%
<b>Sports &amp; Fitness/Sports Fans</b>	2.69%
<b>Food &amp; Dining/Fast Food Cravers</b>	2.68%
<b>Lifestyles &amp; Hobbies/Business Professionals</b>	2.66%
<b>News &amp; Politics/Avid News Readers</b>	2.48%

These affinity audiences are consistent with the four defined market segments that earlier research by program staff indicated.

1. Foodies
2. Social enthusiasts
3. Nature lover
4. Challenge oriented

### *Social Media*

The program Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/IllinoisLearnToHunt](http://www.facebook.com/IllinoisLearnToHunt)), established August 2017, currently has 3,570 followers -- an 50.6% increase over previous years. Facebook posts are made daily (weekdays) to inform potential participants about program offerings, share infographics, and other program-generated content useful for potential, new, and current hunters. Facebook posts during this grant segment reached an audience of 293,618 individuals.

## **LIFEMODE SEGMENTATION**

In order to develop an objective strategy to mitigate the decline of hunting participation in Illinois, an analysis of geodemographic segmentation is needed. The most significant application of geodemographic segmentation is for marketing efforts and identifying priority geographies (Troy, 2008). State Fish and Wildlife Agencies and conservation organizations have been attempting to recruit, retain, and reactivate new hunters with some success. However, R3 programs cannot be maximized without the involvement of traditional industry marketing techniques, such as geodemographic segmentation. Geodemographic datasets were obtained from Environmental System Research Institute's (ESRI, 2014) Tapestry and LifeMode segmentation system at the regional, county, and census tract level. The Tapestry system breaks U.S. residential areas into 14 LifeMode groups and further into 67 Tapestry segments using a combination of data from the U.S. Census, the American Community Survey, and Experian's INSOURCE consumer database and lifestyle data from GfK MRI for segmentation (ESRI, 2020). For this analysis, we will be using the 14 LifeMode groups. Because this leaves little consumer variation at the regional or county level, it is often identified as one of the drawbacks of using geodemographic classification. However, even with its adherent limitations, geodemographic segmentation used for this analysis will provide a unique depiction of the geodemographic correlates of the Illinois public's interest in hunting.

### *Current Illinois Hunters*

A random sample of 3,000 hunters was selected from adult 2020 Illinois resident hunting license holders. All resident license types were included in the sample frame except for Youth License Holders. The random sample was then geocoded, and values were attached to their respective data points and analyzed to find the LifeMode composition of Illinois hunters and their spatial distribution throughout the state. This analysis was completed at the Census Tract level. LifeMode segments were then compared to the Illinois general population (Figure 9).

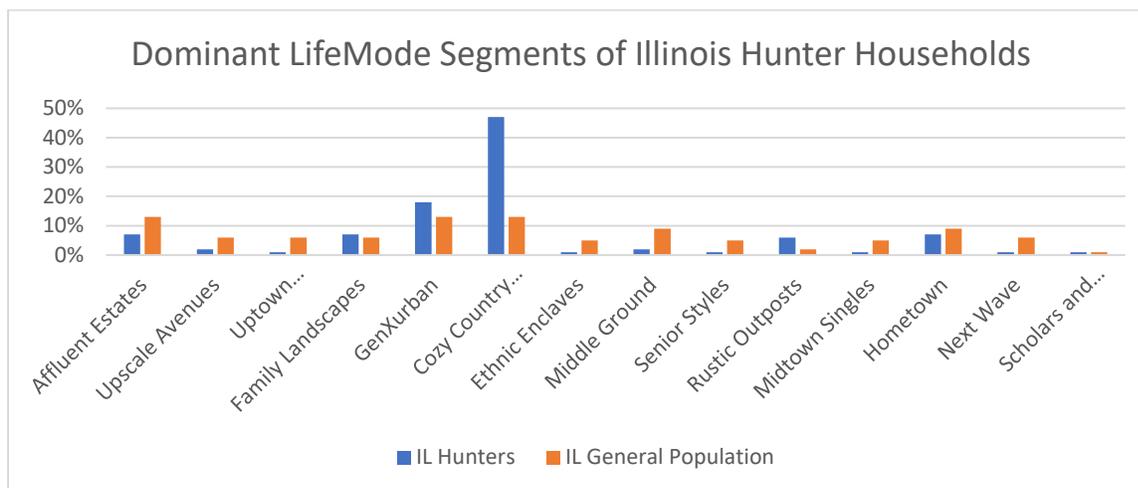


Figure 9: Dominant LifeMode segments of Illinois Hunter Households and general Illinois Population.

Illinois hunters are more likely to live in areas geodemographically segmented as Cozy County Living in ESRI’s LifeMode Segmentation System. Though the segment name, Cozy Country Living, is designed to give a basic outlook on this segment, it is important to understand what market, demographic, and behavioral traits are associated with individuals in this segment.

- Empty nesters in bucolic settings
- Largest US LifeMode group, almost half of all households are located in the Midwest
- Homeowners with pets, residing in single-family dwellings in rural areas; almost 30% have 3 or more vehicles
- Politically conservative and believe in the importance of buying American
- Own domestic trucks, motorcycles, and ATV’s/UTVs
- Prefer to eat at home
- Own every tool and piece of equipment available to maintain their homes, vehicles, and lawns
- Listen to country music; enjoy outdoor activities, such as fishing, hunting, camping, boating, and bird watching

This illustrates that many of Illinois’ hunters are like-minded and share similar interests. Although this trend is not surprising, it illustrates the need to reach new audiences and to increase diversity among Illinois hunters.

Utilizing registration surveys, workshop participants' dominant tapestry LifeMode (defined in Appendix 1) segment (census tract level) was analyzed (n=998). Addresses were then geocoded, and values were attached to their respective data points and analyzed to find the LifeMode composition of Illinois hunters and their spatial distribution throughout the state (Figure 10).

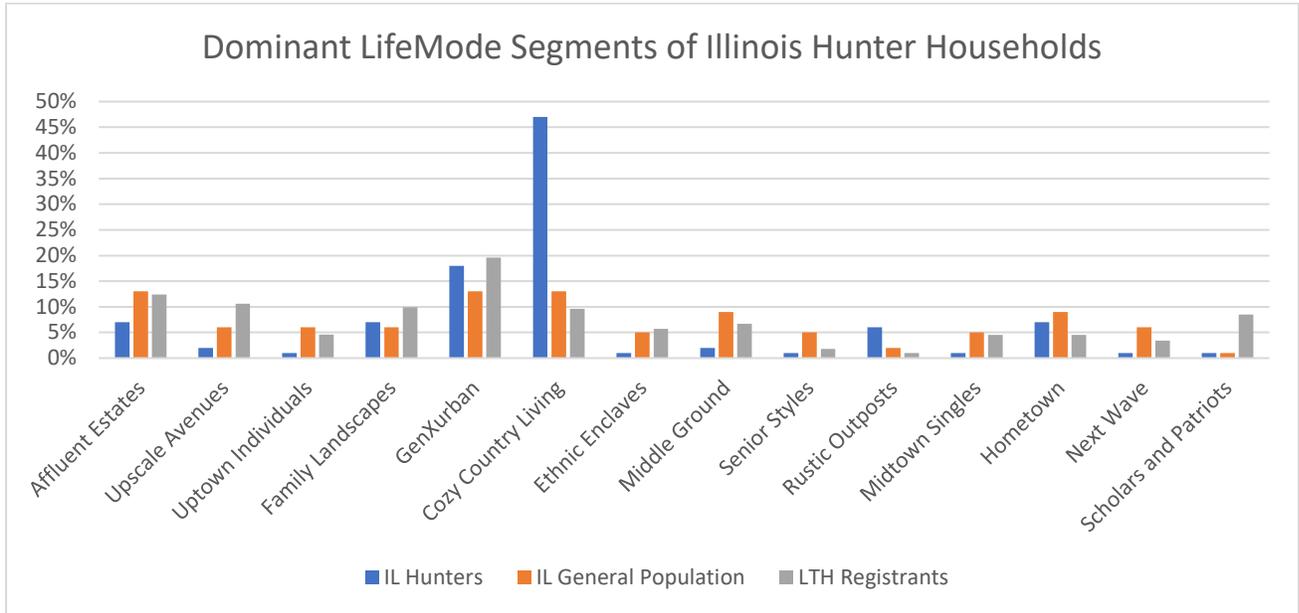


Figure 10: Dominant LifeMode segmentation of Illinois hunters, LtH registrants, and the general population of Illinois.

Learn to Hunt registrants are from across the state and do not follow the same trends as current Illinois hunters. The majority of Illinois hunters reside in rural areas while LtH registrants are more likely to live in urban and affluent areas. This difference illustrates that new audiences are becoming increasingly more interested in hunting and subsequently registering for LtH program offerings. Overtime, program staff will continually refine this analysis to strengthen and refine the model.

### HUNTER R3 SURVEY

A random sample of 3,000 hunters was selected from adult 2019 Illinois resident hunting license holders. Selected individuals were mailed a 4-page self-administered questionnaire designed to query hunters about their hunting activities, motivations, and constraints to hunting in Illinois. We received 1,467 questionnaires for a 50% response rate.

## **Methods**

A random sample of 3,000 hunters was selected from the Illinois resident hunting license database to receive questionnaires. All Illinois resident license types were included in the sample frame except for Youth License Holders. Methods for survey questionnaire mailings and follow-up reminders followed those of Miller et al. (1999). We mailed recipients a self-administered, 4-page questionnaire (Appendix 5), cover letter (Appendix 6), and postage-paid return envelope (hereafter referred to as a survey packet). Data were coded, entered, and analyzed using SPSS 27.0 (SPSS Inc. 2020). Analysis is underway and program staff will provide a full report during the next quarter.

## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

Decreased sales of hunting licenses suggest negative trends for future conservation programs and agency operations through declining revenues. Even though Americans show high overall support for hunting as a recreation and food harvesting activity, hunting license sales continue to decline across much of the country. With the average age of the active hunter continuing to rise, there has been a significant effort to recruit, retain, and reengage hunters. Because the sale of hunting licenses by hunters are the primary support of conservation efforts in North America, and because outdoor recreationists are strong advocates for conservation efforts, the decline in hunting poses problems for the protection, maintenance, and expansion of public and protected lands.

The Illinois Learn to Hunt program is implementing 6 new strategies to bolster programmatic offerings and hunting participation in Illinois. As developing R3 strategies has many obstacles it will take a unified effort among NGO's, Illinois DNR, LtH, and more importantly, Illinois hunters to implement an objective strategy aimed at increasing hunting license sales.

### **Strategy 1: Employ a hybrid learning approach to field-based learning opportunities.**

As time is a major constraint for many Illinois hunters and LtH participants, the Learn to Hunt program has seen a substantial increase in participation of virtual learning opportunities. Through various focus groups, surveys, and conversations with past LtH participants, many individuals discuss the difficulty of having an entire day to attend a LtH field event. To help offset this constraint, the program will be restructuring LtH field events to be more time sensitive while still providing the same level of detailed information and hands-on activities required for skill development.

Historically, LtH workshops were scheduled to have a 2-hour discussion on rules and regulations at the start of field-based workshops. After the success and growth the program has experienced with e-learning modules and webinars, the program has designed distinct species-specific regulation overview modules. These

modules will be distributed to participants at the time of registration prior to the event. Participants can complete the modules at their own pace and timing. These modules are designed to highlight important regulations, how to access regulations, how to read the regulations, and how to find site-specific regulations. It should be noted that these modules clearly state and are designed to not replace reading and comprehending the Illinois DNR Digest of Hunting and Trapping Regulations, but to act as a supplement for those just getting started.

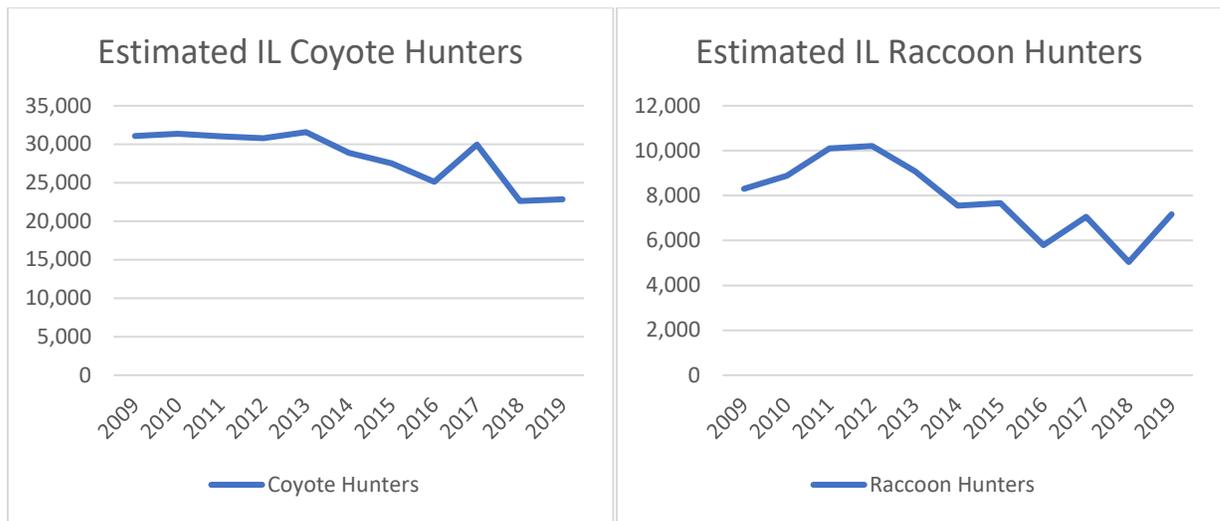
Program staff feels that by offering a hybrid approach that urges participants to go through an e-learning module prior to the in-person workshop has several distinct advantages:

- Ensures event participants have a baseline understanding of rules and regulations prior to event attendance
- Saves on time at program events and allows staff to refine event curricula to focus on hands-on activities that foster skill development
- Allows staff to reduce event duration which has been a noted constraint for many event attendees

It should be noted that registrants can submit questions through the e-learning modules or bring questions with them to the event. Submitted questions will be used to continually refine and adapt modules to provide accurate and concise information. There will also be time set aside at field events to discuss questions about regulations.

**Strategy 2: Begin developing communication and educational opportunities for the Illinois public to learn about furbearer hunting.**

Currently, the Learn to Hunt program focuses on educational opportunities about hunting a variety of upland game and waterfowl species. These are generally the types of hunting with the most interest and arguably the easier types of hunting for novices to begin. However, the goal of outdoor education programs like the Learn to Hunt Program is to be all encompassing and provide learning opportunities across the hunting spectrum. Data obtained to-date suggest there is both a substantial data gap and a lack of opportunities for individuals interested in pursuing hunting of furbearer species. With an evident decline (Figures 11 & 12) of furbearer hunters in Illinois, the program will begin offering furbearer-related offerings.



Figures 11 & 12: Estimated annual Illinois hunters of coyote and raccoons (C. Miller et. al., 2020).

The program is planning on the development and execution of educational materials and events on two species of furbearer – raccoon and coyote. These species, the two most popular furbearers to hunt according to 2019-2020 Illinois Hunter Harvest Reports (C. Miller et. al., 2020), provide ample hunting opportunity, flexible season dates, and ample bag limits which provide an avenue for interested hunters to pursue.

Whereas furbearer hunting has been a controversial topic, we intend to have similar messaging for hunting furbearers as we do for any of the species we cover focusing on personal utilization and highlighting the important role that hunting plays as a wildlife management tool. We will cover legal and safe hunting methods, hunting strategies, regulations, ethics, and making the most use out of the harvested game. Although furbearers may and do get eaten (especially raccoons) the primary use that we will cover is utilization of the fur. Many of the same messages used to show how wild harvested meat has a lower ecological impact than agricultural meat can be used to show how wild harvested fur has a lower ecological footprint than synthetic insulation when used in clothing.

As a legal hunting practice that is often misunderstood, we aim to introduce hunting furbearers that is centered on positive ethics and following the regulations, to ensure that new furbearer hunters are getting the information they need to be positive stewards of the land, and positive representatives of their chosen types of hunting. Hunting furbearers, specifically raccoon and coyote, may open new areas of access to new hunters starting out. It can be nearly impossible to get permission to deer hunt on private property (for a variety of reasons) but getting permission to hunt furbearers appears to be more attainable.

The addition of furbearer hunting to our curriculum allows the Learn to Hunt program to expand and to reach more new audiences with more opportunities to get afield. We intend to coordinate and partner with furbearer hunting groups/organizations and furbearer hunters to hold these events with, helping program staff to

connect further with current hunters. Just as important as trying to recruit new hunters will be educating new and current hunters about the potential positive aspects of hunting furbearers. When done legally and ethically, the hunting of furbearers helps manage and monitor seldom seen wildlife populations, controls and mitigates disease outbreaks and wildlife damage, and gets more individuals in the field, therefore assisting in conservation efforts both actively and passively.

As previously mentioned, there is a substantial data gap about furbearer hunter motivations, constraints, perceptions, and behavior - particularly in relation to ongoing R3 efforts. Developing these outreach materials and programs will allow the program to begin understanding what level of programmatic support the public needs in relation to recruiting, retaining, and reengaging the Illinois public in furbearer hunting.

### **Strategy 3: Develop R3 focused events aimed at young families**

While the social aspect of hunting is not the primary motivator for many LtH participants, it is still very influential among some new and existing hunters. As evidenced through various groups and surveys, many new hunters cite not having someone to hunt with as a major constraint. Many of these same hunters indicated that they have friends or family who hunt; however, for various reasons these individuals are not accessible hunting partners. Universally, participants explain that they could not begin their journey to become a hunter alone. Many new hunters are at the life-stage where they are beginning to start a family or have already done so. Providing R3-related events that foster an already established network of social support, the family, is necessary. Program staff has already begun developing the frame-work for these events, working with a variety of program partners and volunteers to develop R3 family events. In 2019, the program hosted a Family Outdoor Day at William Powers State Park with a variety of partners and had an attendance of more than 140 individuals. Program staff had planned subsequent Family Outdoor Days but were required to cancel these events due to Covid restrictions. However, staff has begun working with partners to develop and plan new events moving forward. To date, the program has two family-related events that will occur in the fall of 2021 (dependent upon Covid restrictions), with plans to expand these offerings in the spring.

### **Strategy 4: Promote diversity, equity, and inclusion of under-represented groups in Illinois hunting.**

Overall demographics of Illinois are shifting. According to recent 2020 U.S. Census Data the percentage of Illinois residents who identify as “Caucasian” fell by 14% over the past decade (Census, 2020). Over the same period, the largest increase was a 15% increase in Illinois residents who identify as “Latino/Hispanic.” With the Illinois population becoming more diverse and an overall lack of diversity amongst hunters, it is necessary to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion to meet R3 objectives.

Being under-represented amongst Illinois hunters, specific constraints are not widely understood or implemented in R3 strategic planning. To develop programmatic support for under-represented groups, program

staff has begun reaching out to local community groups, minority oriented outdoor groups, and some national organizations to collaborate on these efforts. Current conversations are targeting specific outreach events and communication efforts aimed at a very specific under-represented group. These efforts will not only provide learning opportunities and outreach efforts to under-represented groups but will help fill a significant data gap that exists in current R3 research. Program attendees will be surveyed to better understand constraints, motivations, attitudes, and beliefs with respect to Illinois hunting. Additionally, program staff plans to host focus groups with randomly selected individuals from these events to discuss more complex and nuanced topics that are difficult to ascertain through surveys. This strategy will not only better help to serve the Illinois public but open new audiences for LtH program offerings.

As Chicago is the highest concentration of Polish individuals outside of Warsaw (U.S. Census, 2020), Program staff have also begun developing relationships with Polish community groups. Currently, staff has begun translating documents and materials into Polish (e.g., Quick Reference Sheet Illinois Digest of Hunting and Trapping Regulations). Program staff aims to provide outreach events utilizing a program staff member, who is fluent in Polish, to bolster support and participation among the Illinois Polish community.

#### **Strategy 5: Increase hunting participation and retention among women.**

In addition to ethnic and racial diversity, Illinois hunters skew heavily male. However, recent research has shown that women are the fastest growing demographic in hunting; women now account for as much as 15% of hunters nationwide (USFWS, 2016). As women constitute the fastest growing demographic among hunters, it is critical to provide social support, programmatic support, and communication strategies to foster growth and participation among women hunters. According to a recent survey conducted by program staff, 81% of female survey respondents indicated that they would be interested in women only outreach events.

Program staff has begun working with various existing program partners as well as reaching out to female-centric outdoor groups for their experience, guidance, and support. Currently, the program is in conversations with Artemis Sportswomen to begin hosting women-only events this winter/spring. Additionally, the program has had conversations with Well-Armed Women chapters throughout Chicago. A strategy that may be appealing to potential Illinois female hunters is hosting family events which focus on getting the entire family involved (St. James & Miller, 2014). Program staff have implemented Family Outdoor Days events aimed at providing learning/outreach opportunities for the entire family and will continue this effort.

#### **Strategy 6: Develop and implement a comprehensive plan to engage and secure strategic corporate partnerships.**

Program staff have identified a need to secure and engage corporate partnerships. Strategic partnerships are critical to increasing the scope and reach of program offerings. Highlighting the need to increase hunter

recruitment, retention, and reengagement, and the important role that hunting plays in wildlife conservation will be at the forefront of any strategic partnerships. Developing a strategic plan for engaging corporate partnerships will ensure that the process is transparent, effective, and mutually beneficial to all parties.

Through these strategic partnerships, we can ensure that LtH participants have the supplies, opportunities, and skills to be successful while in the field. The Learn to Hunt program could receive support by increasing recognition, publicity, and networking avenues as well as equipment donations.

## **MOVING FORWARD**

Moving forward, the LtH program will focus efforts to continually refine workshop curricula, structure, and event scheduling utilizing participant feedback from post-event questionnaires. In addition to LtH field workshops, geared towards hunter recruitment (R1), the LtH program will continue to offer specialty events geared towards the retention (R2) of current hunters and reengagement (R3) of lapsed hunters. While web-based learning opportunities have proven to be desirable by the Illinois hunting community, web-based opportunities will never replace hands-on learning opportunities. However, the LtH program plans on utilizing web-based learning opportunities to supplement field-based learning opportunities.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

Buckley, J., Stephens, D.J., Twellmann, C., Miller, C.A. (2021). *Positive Effects of eLearning on R3 Outreach in Illinois as a Response to COVID-19*. Illinois Chapter of The Wildlife Society Annual Meeting. April 19, 2021. Illinois.

Stephens, D. J., Miller, C.A., Wefer, M. (2021). *Illinois R3 Efforts*. Illinois Virtual R3 Stakeholder Meeting. Archery Trade Association.

Twellmann, C., Stephens, D. J., Buckley, J., Miller, C.A. (2021). *Diversifying and Targeting R3 Outreach Efforts in Illinois*. Illinois Chapter of The Wildlife Society Annual Meeting. April 19, 2021. Illinois.

## **ADDITIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- Established new strategic partnerships with University of Illinois Extension, Friends of Henderson County Wildlife, New Concept Benefit Group, and continued to collaborate with existing program partners.
- Program staff has been in recent conversations with Artemis Sportswomen and Hunters of Color in anticipation of potential collaboration on R3 efforts and will continue dialogue with these groups.

- Dan Stephens, program leader, joined the radio show Central Illinois Outdoors to discuss Illinois R3 efforts and the Illinois Learn to Hunt program. This program aired on WHOW/WTIM in Clinton, Taylorville, and Shelbyville.
- Program staff participated in the virtual R3 Committee Meeting at the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference.

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## APPENDIX 1 – LifeMode Segmentation Segment Overview Descriptions

### LifeMode 1 Affluent Estates

- Established wealth—educated, well-traveled married couples.
- Less than 10% of all households, with 20% of household income.
- Homeowners (almost 90%), with mortgages (65.2%).
- Married-couple families with children ranging from grade school to college.
- Expect quality; invest in time-saving services.
- Participate actively in their communities.
- Active in sports and enthusiastic travelers.

### LifeMode 2 Upscale Avenues

- Prosperous married couples living in older suburban enclaves.
- Ambitious and hardworking.
- Homeowners (70%); prefer denser, more urban settings with older homes and a large share of town homes.
- Primarily married couples, many with older children.
- Financially responsible.
- Serious shoppers, from Nordstrom to Marshalls or DSW, who appreciate quality and bargains.
- Active in fitness pursuits such as bicycling, jogging, yoga, and hiking.
- Subscribe to premium movie channels such as HBO and Starz.

### LifeMode 3 Uptown Individuals

- Young, successful singles in the city.
- Highest educated market, highest rate of labor force participation, and averse to traditional commitments of marriage and home ownership.
- Urban dwellers, partial to city life, high-rise apartments, and uptown neighborhoods.
- Prefer credit cards over debit cards, while paying down student loans.
- Green and generous to environmental, cultural, and political organizations.
- Internet dependent, from social connections to shopping for fashion, tracking investments, making travel arrangements, and watching television and movies.
- Adventurous and open to new experiences and places.

### LifeMode 4 Family Landscapes

- Successful young families in their first homes.
- Prosperous married-couple families, residing in suburban or semirural areas with a low vacancy rate (second lowest).
- Homeowners (79%) with mortgages (second highest %), living in newer single-family homes, with median home value slightly higher than the U.S. median value.
- Two workers in the family, contributing to the second-highest labor force participation rate, as well as low unemployment.
- Do-it-yourself types who work on home improvement projects as well as their lawns and gardens.
- Sports enthusiasts, typically owning newer sedans or SUVs, dogs, and savings accounts/plans; comfortable with the latest technology.
- Eat out frequently at fast food or family restaurants to accommodate their busy lifestyle.
- Especially enjoy bowling, swimming, playing golf, playing video games, and taking trips to a zoo or theme park.

## LifeMode 5 GenXurban

- Gen X in middle age; families with fewer kids and a mortgage.
- Second-largest Tapestry group, composed of Gen X married couples, and a growing population of retirees.
- About a fifth of residents are 65 or older; about a fourth of households have retirement income.
- Own older single-family homes in urban areas, with 1 or 2 vehicles.
- Live and work in the same county, creating shorter commute times.
- Invest wisely, well insured, comfortable banking online or in person.
- News enthusiasts (read a daily newspaper, watch news on TV, and go online for news).
- Enjoy reading, renting movies, playing board games and cards, doing crossword puzzles, going to museums and rock concerts, dining out, and walking for exercise.

## LifeMode 6 Cozy Country Living

- Empty nesters in bucolic settings.
- Largest Tapestry group, almost half of households located in the Midwest.
- Homeowners with pets, residing in single-family dwellings in rural areas; almost 30% have 3 or more vehicles and, therefore, auto loans.
- Politically conservative and believe in the importance of buying American.
- Own domestic trucks, motorcycles, and ATVs/UTVs.
- Prefer to eat at home, shop at discount retail stores (especially Walmart), bank in person, and spend little time online.
- Own every tool and piece of equipment available to maintain their homes, vehicles, vegetable gardens, and lawns.
- Listen to country music; watch auto racing on TV; and enjoy outdoor activities, such as fishing, hunting, camping, boating, and bird watching.

## LifeMode 7 Sprouting Explorers

- Young homeowners with families.
- Multilingual and multigenerational households with children who represent second-, third-, or fourth-generation Hispanic families.
- Neighborhoods feature single-family, owner-occupied homes built at city's edge, primarily built after 1980.
- Hardworking and optimistic, most residents aged 25 years or older have a high school diploma or some college education.
- Shopping and leisure also focus on their children—baby and children's products from shoes to toys and games and trips to theme parks, water parks, or the zoo.
- Children enjoy playing video games on personal computers or handheld or console devices.
- Many households have dogs for domestic pets.

## LifeMode 8 Middle Ground

- Lifestyles of thirtysomethings.
- Millennials in the middle: single/married, renters/homeowners, middle class/working class.
- Urban market mix of single-family, town home, and multiunit dwellings.
- Majority of residents attended college or attained a college degree.
- Householders have traded their landlines for cell phones, which they use to listen to music, read the news, and get the latest sports updates on their favorite teams.

- Online all the time: use the internet for entertainment (downloading music, watching YouTube, finding dates), social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn), searching for employment.
- Leisure includes nightlife (clubbing, movies), going to the beach, some travel and hiking.

### LifeMode 9 Senior Styles

- Senior lifestyles reveal the effects of saving for retirement.
- Households are commonly married empty nesters or singles living alone; homes are single family (including seasonal getaways), retirement communities, or high-rise apartments.
- More affluent seniors travel and relocate to warmer climates; less affluent, settled seniors are still working toward retirement.
- Cell phones are popular, but so are landlines.
- Many prefer print to digital media: avid readers of newspapers to stay current.
- Subscribe to cable television to watch channels such as Fox News, CNN, and The Weather Channel.
- Residents prefer vitamins and a regular exercise regimen.

### LifeMode 10 Rustic Outposts

- Country life with older families in older homes.
- Depend on manufacturing, retail, and healthcare, with pockets of mining and agricultural jobs.
- Low labor force participation in skilled and service occupations.
- Own affordable, older single-family or mobile homes; vehicle ownership is a must.
- Residents live within their means, shop at discount stores, and maintain their own vehicles (purchased used) and homes.
- Outdoor enthusiasts, who grow their own vegetables, love their pets, and enjoy hunting and fishing.
- Pay bills in person; use the yellow pages; read newspapers, magazines, and mail-order books.

### LifeMode 11 Midtown Singles

- Millennials on the move—single, urban.
- Millennials seeking affordable rents in apartment buildings.
- Work in service and unskilled positions, usually close to home or public transportation.
- Single parents with very young children.
- Embrace the internet, for social networking and downloading content.
- From music and movies to soaps and sports, radio and television fill their lives.
- Brand-savvy shoppers select budget-friendly stores.

### LifeMode 12 Hometown

- Growing up and staying close to home; single householders.
- Close-knit urban communities of young singles (many with children).
- Owners of old, single-family houses, or renters in small multiunit buildings.
- Religion is the cornerstone of many of these communities.
- Visit discount stores and clip coupons.
- Purchase used vehicles to get to and from nearby jobs.

### LifeMode 13 Next Wave

- Urban dwellers; young, hardworking families.
- A large share are foreign born and speak only their native language.
- Young, or multigenerational, families with children are typical.

- Most are renters in older multiunit structures, built in the 1960s or earlier.
- Hardworking with long commutes to jobs, often using public transit to commute to work.
- Spending reflects the youth of these consumers, focus on children (top market for children's apparel) and personal appearance.
- Also a top market for moviegoers (second only to college students) and fast food.
- Partial to soccer and basketball.

#### LifeMode 14 Scholars and Patriots

- College and military populations that share many traits due to the transitional nature of this LifeMode group.
- Highly mobile, recently moved to attend school or serve in military.
- The youngest market group, with a majority in the 15- to 24-year-old range.
- Renters with roommates in nonfamily households.
- For many, no vehicle is necessary as they live close to campus, military base, or jobs.
- Fast-growing group with most living in apartments.
- Part-time jobs help to supplement active lifestyles.
- Millennials are tethered to their phones and electronic devices, typically spending over 5 hours online everyday tweeting, blogging, and consuming media.
- Purchases aimed at fitness, fashion, technology, and the necessities of moving.
- Highly social, free time is spent enjoying music, being out with friends, seeing movies.
- Try to eat healthy, but often settle for fast food.

## APPENDIX 2 – Post-event web-based questionnaire, developed and hosted through Qualtrics.

What webinar did you attend?

- Habitat Management for IL Hunters (29)
  - Deer Firearm and Muzzleloader Equipment Overview (28)
  - Archery Equipment Overview and Buying Guide (27)
  - Plant Identification for IL Hunters (Woody Plants) (1)
  - Shotgun Overview: A Hunter's Perspective (26)
  - Turkey Hunting Q&A (25)
  - Shed Hunting Overview and Strategies (24)
  - Turkey Calling 101 (23)
  - Turkey Hunting 102 (22)
  - Turkey Hunting 101 (21)
  - Goose Hunting 102 (20)
  - Late-season Deer Hunting Strategies (19)
  - Bird Dog 101 (18)
  - Upland Hunting 102 (17)
  - Upland Hunting 101 (16)
  - Deer Stand Placement Strategies (2)
  - Squirrel and Rabbit Hunting 101 (11)
  - Deer Hunting 101 (13)
  - Deer Hunting 102 (14)
  - Waterfowl Hunting 101 (15)
-

Did you participate in the live webinar or view the recording?

Live Webinar (1)

Recording (2)

---

Name (OPTIONAL)

---

How satisfied were you with the webinar you attended?

	I was not satisfied (1)	Under satisfied (2)	Satisfied (4)	Very satisfied (5)	Exceeded expectations (6)
Satisfaction level (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

---

1. Have you ever accompanied someone hunting, but not hunted yourself?

Yes (1)

No (2)

---

2. Have you ever eaten wild game meat?

Yes (1)

No (2)

I don't know (3)

---

3. Do you have friends or family that hunt?

- Yes (1)
  - No (2)
  - I don't know (3)
- 

4. What species are you interested in hunting? (Choose all that apply)

- Deer (1)
  - Turkey (2)
  - Pheasant (3)
  - Dove (4)
  - Quail (5)
  - Squirrel (6)
  - Rabbit (7)
  - Duck (8)
  - Goose (9)
  - Other: (10) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

5. Why do you want to hunt?

- Enter response below: (1) \_\_\_\_\_
-

6. How long have you been interested in hunting?

less than a year (1)

1 year (2)

2 years (3)

3 years (4)

4 years (5)

5 years+ (6)

---

7. What has kept you from hunting in the past?

Enter response below: (1) \_\_\_\_\_

---



8. If you have hunted before, how long has it been since you last hunted?

less than a year (1)

1 year (2)

2 years (3)

3 years (4)

4 years (5)

5 years+ (6)

---



9. Have you ever shot a firearm?

Yes (1)

No (2)

---

10. Have you ever shot a compound bow?

Yes (1)

No (2)

---

11. Have you ever shot a cross bow?

Yes (1)

No (2)

---

12a. How often do you use public land?

Never (1)

Rarely (2)

Sometimes (3)

Often (4)

---

12b. What do you use public land for?

- Running (1)
  - Cycling (2)
  - Hiking (3)
  - Camping (4)
  - Boating (5)
  - Fishing (6)
  - Other: (7) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

13. In what other outdoor activities do you participate?

- Running (1)
  - Cycling (2)
  - Hiking (3)
  - Camping (4)
  - Boating (5)
  - Fishing (6)
  - Other: (7) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

14. What is your age?

- In years: (1) \_\_\_\_\_
-

15. What is your gender?

Male (1)

Female (2)

---

16a. Are you an Illinois resident?

Yes (1)

No (2)

---

16b. How long have you lived in Illinois?

in years: (1) \_\_\_\_\_

---

16d. In what state are you a resident?

State abbreviation: (1) \_\_\_\_\_

---

16c. Do you intend to live in Illinois for at least the next 5 years?

Yes (1)

No (2)

I don't know (3)

---

17. How many children do you have?

- 0 (1)
  - 1 (2)
  - 2 (3)
  - 3 (4)
  - 4+ (5)
- 

18. In what range is the combined gross income of your household?

- (1)
  - \$41 - \$60K (2)
  - \$61 - \$80K (3)
  - \$81 - \$100K (4)
  - \$101K+ (5)
- 

What is your home zip code?

\_\_\_\_\_

---

Please provide us with any suggestions that would improve the webinar content or webinar experience for the future.

- Please answer below: (5) \_\_\_\_\_

**End of Block: Test to see if this changes anything**

---

### APPENDIX 3 – Program created infographics.

OBJECTIVE: Educate the Illinois public and hunters on the importance of the Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp.

BACKGROUND: A recent survey, in Illinois, showed that more than 60% of waterfowl hunters did not know how funding from the Federal Duck Stamp was used (Miller, 2003). The Federal Duck Stamp is often referred to as the greatest success story in modern conservation, thus educating the public on this topic is extremely important.

**THE FEDERAL MIGRATORY BIRD HUNTING AND CONSERVATION STAMP**

**“DUCK STAMP”**

THE FEDERAL DUCK STAMP IS REQUIRED TO HUNT ANY WATERFOWL SPECIES IN THE UNITED STATES

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR \$25  
Wood Duck & Hairy Wood Duck  
Valid After Jan. 16, 2008  
MIGRATORY BIRD HUNTING AND CONSERVATION STAMP

**98% OF FUNDS ARE USED TO PURCHASE AND ENHANCE CRITICAL HABITAT**

SINCE THE DUCK STAMPS INCEPTION IN **1934** MORE THAN **\$1,000,000,000** HAS BEEN PRODUCED

**RESULTING IN THE PROTECTION OF MORE THAN**

**6,000,000 ACRES**

OF CRITICAL HABITAT BENEFITING DUCKS, GEESE AND **MANY** NON-GAME SPECIES!

**MANY OF THESE ACRES ARE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES OPEN FOR HUNTING AND BIRDING OPPORTUNITIES**

Data from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**BLINDS LEARNtoHUNT**  
WWW.LEARNTOHUNTIL.COM

OBJECTIVE: Educate the public on how hunters impact on the local economy and conservation efforts.

BACKGROUND: Many new and current hunters, as well as the general public, are unaware of the impacts hunting has towards Illinois conservation efforts.



OBJECTIVE: Educate the public on the economic impact of waterfowl hunting

BACKGROUND: Waterfowl hunting has long been cited by waterfowl hunters as a significant boon to the local economy. However, most hunters do not know the totality of the economic impact.



**OBJECTIVE:** Educate the public on the importance of the North American Model of Conservation and its history.

**BACKGROUND:** The North American Model of Conservation is a unique model that exemplifies the importance of regulations and conservation in North America. The principles outlined in the model are pillars for how natural resources are sustainably managed. This is an important concept to understand when learning how to hunt because most regulations are embedded in the model.

# NORTH AMERICAN MODEL OF wildlife conservation

<b>Wildlife as public trust resources</b>			Wildlife is held by the public through state and federal governments.
<b>Elimination of markets for game</b>			Commercial hunting and the sale of wildlife is prohibited to ensure the sustainability of wildlife populations.
<b>Allocation of wildlife by law</b>			Wildlife is allocated to the public by law, as opposed to market principles, land ownership or other status.
<b>Wildlife can only be killed for legitimate purposes</b>			The killing of wildlife must be done only for food, fur, self-defense, or the protection of property.
<b>Wildlife is considered an international resource</b>			Effective management of wildlife is done through international treaties and the cooperation of agencies.
<b>Science is the proper tool for discharge of wildlife policy</b>			Science is the basis for informed management and decision-making processes.
<b>Democracy of hunting</b>			Every citizen has an equal opportunity to hunt.

**ILLINOIS LEARNtoHUNT**

OBJECTIVE: Educate the public as to the importance of the correct butcher cuts and uses of venison

BACKGROUND: As food is a major motivation for hunters, understanding the unique cuts of venison and how each cut can be prepared is incredibly useful.

**ILLINOIS LEARN to HUNT**  
**VENISON CUTS AND USES**

**FIELD DRESSING YOUR OWN ANIMAL IS A BIG PART OF HARVESTING IT. MANY HUNTERS LOOK FORWARD TO BUTCHERING AND SERVING THEIR OWN FRESH MEAT!**

**SHOULDER/ARM**  
ROAST  
SOUP  
STEW  
GROUND

**NECK**  
ROAST

**SHOULDER**  
ROAST

**ARM**  
ROAST

**SHANK**

**BACKSTRAP/LOIN**  
STEAKS  
FILETS

**BACKSTRAP**

**SIDE RIB**

**FLANK**

**SIRLOIN**  
TOP

**RUMP**  
ROAST

**ROUND**  
STEAKS

**SHANK**

**SHANK**  
SOUP  
STEW  
BURGER  
JERKY

**RIBS**  
SPARERIBS

**SIRLOIN**  
STEAKS  
ROAST

**FLANK**  
GROUND

**RUMP**  
ROAST  
STEAKS

**UNDERSTANDING THE CUTS OF MEAT AND THE PROPER WAY TO BUTCHER IS IMPORTANT TO NOT ONLY HAVE THE FRESHEST MEAT, BUT ALSO THE MOST DELICIOUS!**

**OBJECTIVE:** Educate the public as to common identification characteristics for common species of Dove in Illinois.

**BACKGROUND:** As many new hunters are unaware of identification techniques of doves, it is critical to educate hunters on how to identify various species.



# ILLINOIS LEARN to HUNT

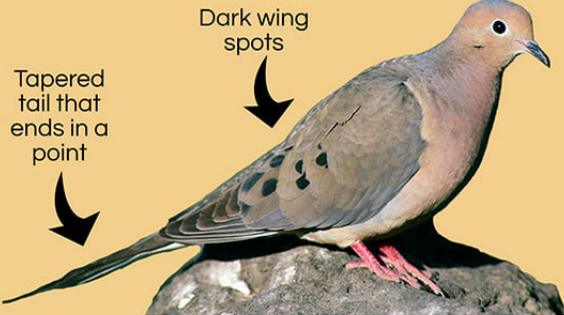
## IDENTIFYING DOVE SPECIES IN ILLINOIS

Identifying doves in Illinois can be challenging especially if they are in flight. Learning differentiating characteristics is important to ensure any harvest is within legal dove hunting bag limits.

---

### 1 Mourning Dove

Mourning doves are a common species throughout Illinois. Their diet consists of seeds from weeds, herbs, and grains. The daily limit in Illinois for mourning doves is 15 and the possession limit is 45.



- Smaller than the Eurasian Dove
- Range in the lower 48 states of the U.S.
- They are found in areas with abundant food such as agricultural fields

---

### 2 Eurasian Collared-Dove

Eurasian Collared-Doves are a non-native species to Illinois. These doves can be harvested during regular dove season. Eurasian Collared-Doves do not count towards the daily bag limit.



- Larger than other dove species
- Their range is in the lower 48 states of the U.S.
- They are common in both urban and suburban habitats



OBJECTIVE: Educate the public on common preventative measures for biting insects.

BACKGROUND: Many LtH participants are novice outdoors people and have little experience with preventative measures to keep them safe afield. Highlighting these techniques is an important service to the Illinois public.

**ILLINOIS LEARNtoHUNT**

## HOW TO PREPARE AGAINST TICKS AND MOSQUITOES

### STAYING PROTECTED IN THE WOODS

#### TICKS

• Nymph Dog Tick (actual size)

Permethrin is the best substance to repel both ticks and mosquitoes. Treat clothing only, let dry. Can last up to six washes!

Permethrin affects the nervous system in insects causing muscle spasms, paralysis and death.

Ticks most likely to be encountered by people:  
American Dog Tick  
Lonestar Tick  
Blacklegged (Deer) Tick  
Brown Dog Tick  
Winter Tick<sup>2</sup>

Tuck socks into pants, duct tape around socks.

Be on the lookout for rash or illness followed by a fever.

Examine clothing and skin carefully! If you're out in the woods for a prolonged amount of time, check every 2-3 hours.

Carefully remove embedded ticks with tweezers.

#### MOSQUITOES

Light colored, long-sleeve shirt and pants to avoid exposing skin. Cover your feet as well.

Mosquito repellent such as permethrin on clothing and gear.

Floodwater and vector mosquitoes are the most common in IL. Floodwater mosquitoes aren't prone to carry diseases, however, vector mosquitoes are.

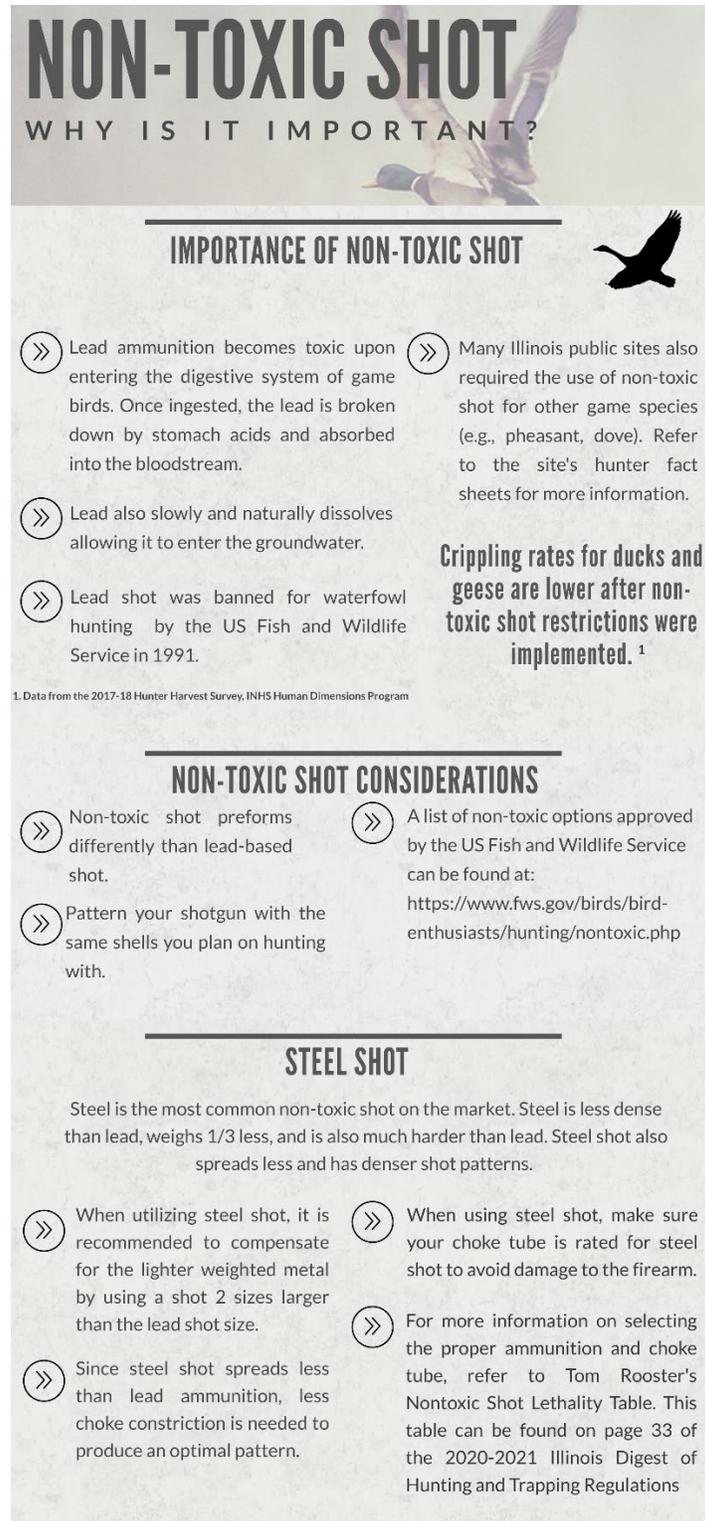
Personal repellent with a % of DEET to be applied on skin (if not too strong) and clothing.

West-Nile virus, Zika virus, and encephalitis are main diseases<sup>2</sup> to be aware of.

1: Illinois Department of Public Health (2003)  
2: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2016)

**OBJECTIVE:** Provide a brief overview of non-toxic shot requirements and considerations.

**BACKGROUND:** As many Illinois DNR sites are transitioning to non-toxic shot requirements, it is imperative to provide factual information on why this transition is occurring and how it may impact shot selection and shot performance.



# NON-TOXIC SHOT

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

### IMPORTANCE OF NON-TOXIC SHOT

- Lead ammunition becomes toxic upon entering the digestive system of game birds. Once ingested, the lead is broken down by stomach acids and absorbed into the bloodstream.
- Lead also slowly and naturally dissolves allowing it to enter the groundwater.
- Lead shot was banned for waterfowl hunting by the US Fish and Wildlife Service in 1991.
- Many Illinois public sites also required the use of non-toxic shot for other game species (e.g., pheasant, dove). Refer to the site's hunter fact sheets for more information.

**Crippling rates for ducks and geese are lower after non-toxic shot restrictions were implemented. <sup>1</sup>**

1. Data from the 2017-18 Hunter Harvest Survey, INHS Human Dimensions Program

### NON-TOXIC SHOT CONSIDERATIONS

- Non-toxic shot performs differently than lead-based shot.
- Pattern your shotgun with the same shells you plan on hunting with.
- A list of non-toxic options approved by the US Fish and Wildlife Service can be found at: <https://www.fws.gov/birds/bird-enthusiasts/hunting/nontoxic.php>

### STEEL SHOT

Steel is the most common non-toxic shot on the market. Steel is less dense than lead, weighs 1/3 less, and is also much harder than lead. Steel shot also spreads less and has denser shot patterns.

- When utilizing steel shot, it is recommended to compensate for the lighter weighted metal by using a shot 2 sizes larger than the lead shot size.
- When using steel shot, make sure your choke tube is rated for steel shot to avoid damage to the firearm.
- Since steel shot spreads less than lead ammunition, less choke constriction is needed to produce an optimal pattern.
- For more information on selecting the proper ammunition and choke tube, refer to Tom Rooster's Nontoxic Shot Lethality Table. This table can be found on page 33 of the 2020-2021 Illinois Digest of Hunting and Trapping Regulations

OBJECTIVE: Provide a brief overview of common methods for leading targets.

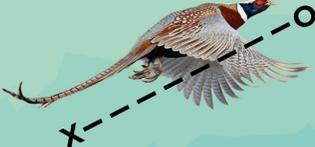
BACKGROUND: Many novice shooters/hunters are unaware of the many different methods for leading targets.

ILLINOIS  
**LEARN to HUNT**

TOP THREE METHODS FOR LEADING TARGETS

Game birds are fast! Trying these methods when hunting will ensure not only successful, but also ethical, harvests.

### SWING-THROUGH METHOD



**"butt, belly, beak, bang"**

With this method, start the gun behind the bird and swing all the way through it.<sup>1</sup> Pulling the trigger as you pass the beak is great for flushing birds and shots inside 30 yards. "Butt, belly, beak, bang" is a good way to remember this method.

AMMUNITION  
GAUGE  
CHOKE TUBE

### MAINTAINED LEAD METHOD



**IMPORTANT POINTS!**  
These factors are all relevant to shooting different types of birds. Patterning your shotgun will help you understand the BB pattern for the choke you are using.

This method is useful for longer shots when you know where the target is coming from. Putting the muzzle ahead of the bird & maintaining the same speed as the target. Creating a "lead" on the bird so you don't shoot behind it. Practicing estimating distance in front of the bird is the best way to get good at this method.

### PULL-AWAY METHOD



**STAY FOCUSED  
GET IN LINE  
MOVE WITH THE BIRD  
FOLLOW THROUGH**

This method relies on the shooter moving with the bird which means the barrel and the target are together for the whole shot. When the speed is matched, this allows the shooter the right moment to pull the trigger. This method keeps the gun moving through the entire shot process and allows for a smooth follow through.<sup>2</sup>

1. Bourjaily, Phil. "Top Three Methods for Leading a Target." 23 May 2016. 2. Wallace, Jake. "Shotgun Target Leads." 23 Sept. 2018.

OBJECTIVE: Provide a brief overview of morel mushrooms.

BACKGROUND: Many hunters have a desire to hunt for wild mushrooms. Providing basic information regarding how/where to find morels provided an engaging way to find new audiences and to promote other outdoor activities to Illinois hunters.

**LEARN to HUNT**

# Morel Mushrooms

## Identification

If you are new to mushroom hunting, finding an experienced forager to go with is probably the best way to get started. If you don't have one of those at your disposal, you can use these simple tricks to help you identify morel mushrooms with confidence. Morel mushrooms are actually a suite of species but they all share some common characteristics.

Cap resembles a walnut → Cap attached Seemlessly → Hollow from top to base

Morel mushroom caps can vary from nearly black to yellow or light gray. They all are filled with grooves and pits and resemble a walnut husk. The cap has a seamless transition to the stalk and the entire mushroom is hollow when split lengthwise. Always be positive of your identification, when in doubt throw it out!



True Morels



### Half-Free Morel

Note that when split lengthwise, its obvious that the cap folds over the stem like an umbrella. In a true morel (see illustration) there is no overhang from the cap.



### False Morel

False morels are generally wider than they are tall and have a red hue. When split, false morels are not hollow like true morels. Even though the false morel in the picture may be obvious, always slice your morels in half just to be sure.

## When and Where

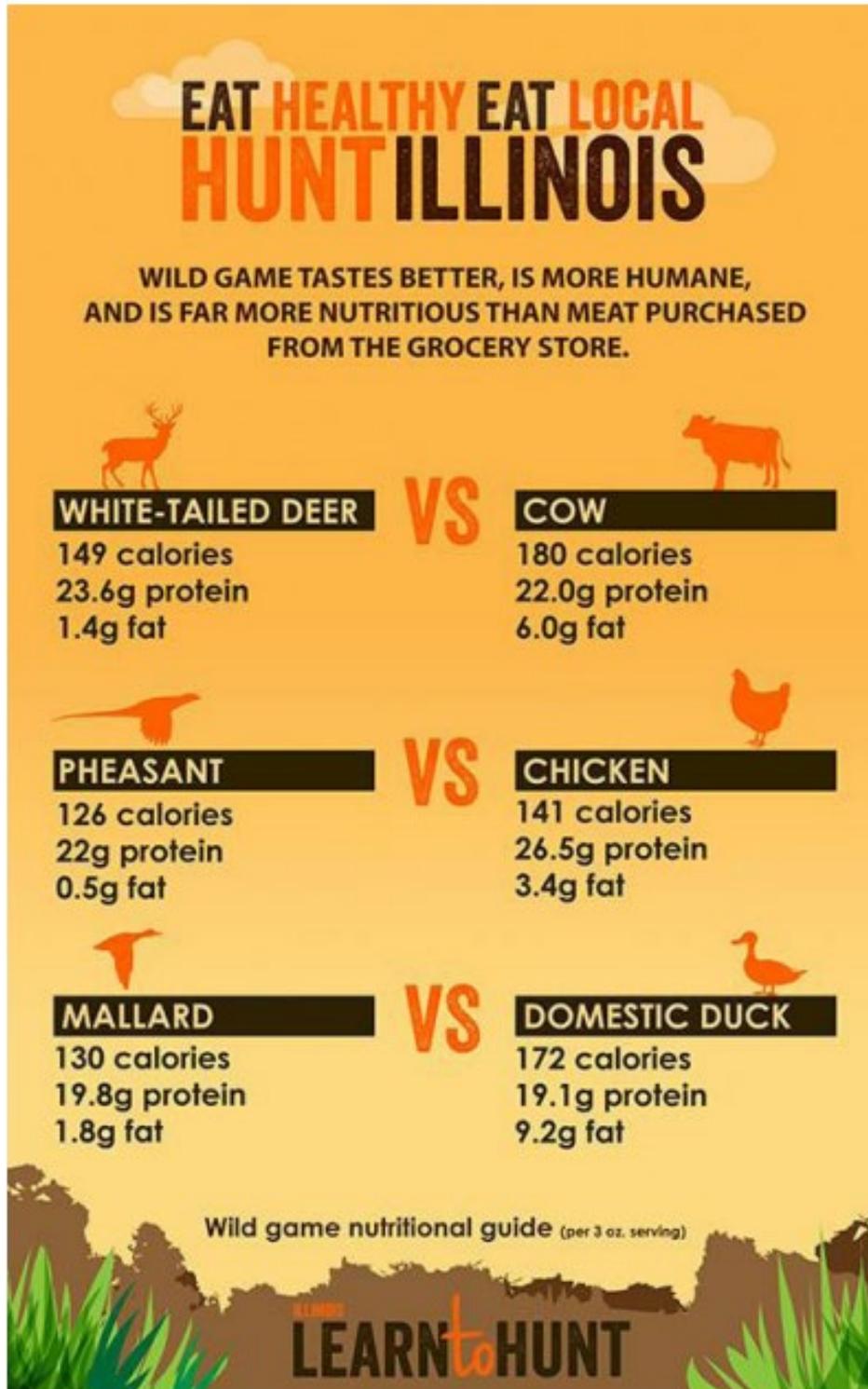
One of the coolest things about morel mushrooms is their seasonality. Few living things in Illinois are as particular. Generally beginning in mid to late March, the first morel will pop up in Southern Illinois and by the end of April the season is gone up in the northern tier. For a brief period, if conditions are right, these tasty little fungal fruiting bodies can be picked from woodlots across Illinois.

Morels can be found about anywhere but the best places to look are woodlands with mixed hardwoods. Especially productive are alkaline soils with lots of organic matter with elms, ash, sycamore or apple trees nearby. Most mushroom hunters will travel lots of extra steps to look under an old elm tree with some bark falling off. Old apple orchards can also be good but keep in mind that toxins can build up in mushrooms. Any area that uses pesticides or has other chemical pollutants should be avoided.



OBJECTIVE: Educate the public that hunting is healthy and local.

BACKGROUND: With the recent rise of local, organic, and sustainable food many participants cite healthier food as a primary motivation of hunting. However, the majority of participants do not know the specifics about the health benefits of wild game.



OBJECTIVE: Educate the public on the steps taken to field dress a deer.

BACKGROUND: Field dressing is an important part of deer hunting. Because the LtH staff can't demonstrate field dressing an entire deer every workshop, learning the basic concepts through an infographic is a good alternative resource to provide

# HOW TO FIELD DRESS

## WHITE-TAILED DEER

Field dressing is the process of removing the internal organs of harvest game. Field dressing prevents bacterial contamination, ensures rapid heat loss, and reduces the overall weight of the animal.

**Step 1**  
Position the deer with the hind legs downhill and begin making an incision in the skin. Begin between the hind legs and continue all the way up through the chest area.



**Step 2**  
Tease open the abdominal cavity to expose the entrails. Take extra caution to avoid puncturing the stomach.



**Step 3**  
Follow the deeper incision along the first shallower incision, using your fingers to pull the skin away from the entrails as you cut to keep from puncturing them.



**Step 4**  
Allow the entrails to fall out of the body cavity. Cut through one side of the rib cage to expose the chest cavity.



**Step 5**  
Cut the connective tissues and diaphragm away from the inner body wall to free the entrails from the body cavity.



**Step 6**  
Cut around the anus to detach the excretory tract.



**Step 7**  
Remove all entrails from the deer and dispose of according to landowner preference. You may want to save the heart, liver, and kidneys to eat!



**Step 8**  
Transport your deer out of the woods. Removing the entrails reduces the weight of the deer substantially.



LEARNtoHUNT

OBJECTIVE: Educate the public on how to reduce their carbon footprint on the environment through hunting.

BACKGROUND: Greenhouse gas emissions are becoming a substantial topic in the mainstream media and in people's daily lives. Explaining the environmental benefits of hunting vs factory-farming operations is important.



OBJECTIVE: Educate the public on how to hunt public land.

BACKGROUND: Informing the public on how to scout public land is a great resource especially if people are new to hunting or new to hunting public land.



# HOW TO SCOUT

## FOR WHITE-TAILED DEER ON PUBLIC LAND

### CHOOSING A LOCATION

Identifying a potential hunting site can be a daunting task. Utilizing technology and a variety of online resources allows hunters to maximize time afield.

- 1 Utilize hunter fact sheets**  
IDNR hunter fact sheets give details about every public hunting site in the state. Including: what species, where, and when you can hunt.
- 2 Utilize harvest reports**  
IDNR hunter harvest reports detail harvest and hunter effort for all public sites. This can give an indication of a productive site.
- 3 Communicate with others**  
Other passionate hunters can have valuable insight into which public sites are more productive than others.

### IDENTIFY KEY AREAS TO TARGET SCOUTING EFFORTS

With advancements in satellite imagery, hunters can theorize how animals will move across the landscape. This will give a valuable starting point when beginning field scouting. Primarily look for:

- 01 PINCH POINTS**  
Generally terrain or man-made features that channel deer movement
- 02 TRAVEL CORRIDORS**  
Routes of cover, such as tree lines or streams, that allow deer to move safely across the landscape
- 03 BEDDING AREAS**  
Areas of thick wooded or grassy cover that have access to multiple escape routes
- 04 FOOD SOURCES**  
Areas of oak acorns or other mast crops, grassy areas and agriculture crops that contain adequate browse
- 05 WATER SOURCES**  
Streams, creeks, and small ponds that provide deer access to water while remaining in cover

LEARN to HUNT

OBJECTIVE: Educate the public on how to hunt public land.

BACKGROUND: Informing the public on how to scout public land is a great resource especially if people are new to hunting or new to hunting public land.

# HOW TO SCOUT

## FOR WILD TURKEY ON ILLINOIS PUBLIC LAND

### CHOOSING A LOCATION

Identifying a potential hunting site can be a daunting task. Utilizing technology and a variety of online resources allows hunters to maximize time afield.



- 1 Utilize hunter fact sheets**  
IDNR hunter fact sheets give details about every public hunting site in the state. Including: what species, where, and when you can hunt.
- 2 Utilize harvest reports**  
IDNR hunter harvest reports detail harvest and hunter effort for all public sites. This can give an indication of a productive site.
- 3 Communicate with others**  
Other passionate hunters can have valuable insight into which public sites are more productive than others.

### IDENTIFY KEY AREAS TO HUNT THROUGH SCOUTING EFFORTS

Diligent and consistent scouting is a crucial part of turkey hunting. Continue to scout through turkey season as behavior and locations of birds can change throughout the season. While scouting, look for:

#### 01 ROOSTING TREES

Understanding turkey roosting habits on your hunting ground is imperative. East and north-east facing slopes make prime roosting areas, protecting birds from prevailing westerly winds. Focus on riparian areas. Look for feathers, droppings and tracks.

#### 02 FOOD SOURCES

Toms don't feed heavily in the spring, however, they will follow the feeding hens. If hens are feeding in the timber, you will notice a disturbance in the leaves as turkeys scratch the leaves to expose food. Also, scan open fields to search for feeding hens.

#### 03 STRUTTING AREAS

Watch open fields and pastures for strutting toms. In the woods, look along logging roads, ridgetops, flats, or in bottomland timber stands. If active strutting is not occurring, you can often find drag marks (created by a strutting bird's wings) and figure-eight disturbances in the leaves.

OBJECTIVE: Provide an overview of the basics of remote scouting.

BACKGROUND: Program staff hosted remote scouting webinars and seminars teaching participants how to use modern tools to better prepare their hunt strategy. This infographic was developed and used to promote the event(s) and to educate the public on the concept of remote scouting.

**ILLINOIS LEARN to HUNT Remote Scouting**

**WHAT IS REMOTE SCOUTING?**

Utilizing technology to scout possible hunting areas. **▶▶**

Allows hunters to get a better understanding of landscape and predict animal movement

Best used in conjunction with field scouting efforts

**WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?**

Understanding the area by remote scouting can allow you to maximize your afield scouting time, therefore, maximizing your hunting time.

**AVAILABLE SOFTWARE**

ON X HUNT  
Google Earth  
HuntStand

Utilize topography  
Stimulate times of day  
View changes over time

Both OnX Hunt and HuntStand Apps show wind current direction

OnX Hunt  
Google Earth  
Hunt Stand

OnX Hunt allows you to add various types of waypoints, mark distances, acreage and more. It has an offline feature that is really important if you're hunting in an area with no reception. This is an excellent tool for remote scouting.

**GOALS OF REMOTE SCOUTING**

Habitat and Terrain Identification	Site and Access Identification
Food	Public or Private Access
Water	Mark Points of Interest
Cover	Vehicular Access
Pinch/Ambush Points	Foot Access

OBJECTIVE: Provide an overview of hunter ethics.

BACKGROUND: Program participants have regularly expressed concerns about remaining ethical to portray hunting in a positive manner and to avoid ruining someone else's hunt or time afield. To alleviate these concerns, staff created this infographic to promote and foster ethical hunting. Staff also used the infographic to promote hunter ethics webinars and seminars.

# ILLINOIS LEARN to HUNT

## WHAT MAKES A RESPONSIBLE HUNTER?

### HUNTER RESPONSIBILITY

Being a responsible hunter means being a responsible citizen.

- CARES FOR WILDLIFE
- ENSURES SAFETY OF THEMSELVES AND OTHERS AROUND THEM
- PROVIDES AND PROTECTS OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

- ▶ Respecting hunting seasons and reporting poachers
- ▶ Wearing blaze orange, respecting shooting hours, proper gun safety
- ▶ Supporting conservation efforts
- ▶ Taking initiative to learn rules and regulations, accepting personal actions taken
- ▶ Giving back to the land

- TAKES FULL RESPONSIBILITY OF ACTIONS
- KNOWS AND PRACTICES CONSERVATION

**BECOME A STEWARD OF THE LAND!**

OBJECTIVE: Provide an overview of hunter ethics.

BACKGROUND: Many novice waterfowl hunters are unaware of the distinct differences between the groups of ducks. Providing a basic overview of duck classification aids in their understanding of waterfowl ecology and assists with duck identification.

ILLINOIS  
**LEARN to HUNT**

**DABBING VS. DIVING DUCKS**  
KNOWING YOUR DUCKS: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?



DABBING		VS	DIVING	
MALLARD	GADWALL		CANVASBACK	SCAUP
TEAL	PINTAIL		BUFFLEHEAD	REDHEAD
SHOVELER	WOOD DUCK		RING-NECK DUCK	RUDDY DUCK
WIGEON	BLACK DUCK		GOLDENEYE	
<b>FEED ON THE SURFACE OF THE WATER</b>			<b>FEED AT THE BOTTOM OF LAKES, PONDS, &amp; RIVERS</b>	
SEEDS			SMALL MOLLUSKS	
GRAINS			SMALL FISH	
INSECTS AND LARVAE		<b>FOOD</b>	WILD CELERY	
AQUATIC PLANTS/GRASSES SUCH AS SEDGE			VEGETATION	
<b>FREQUENT SHALLOW WATERS</b>			<b>FREQUENT LARGE, DEEP BODIES OF WATER</b>	
FLOODED FIELDS, MARSHES, PONDS, AND DRY LAND			LAKES, PONDS, RIVERS	
FEED BY TIPPING UP RATHER THAN DIVING			FEED BY DIVING DOWNWARDS	
TAKE FLIGHT WITHOUT A RUNNING START		<b>BEHAVIOR</b>	NEED A RUNNING START TO TAKE FLIGHT	
SWIM WITH TAIL HELD CLEAR OF THE WATER			USE FEET AND WINGS TO PROPEL THEM DOWNWARDS	
<b>WIDER BODIES</b>			<b>MORE COMPACT BODIES</b>	
BRIGHTLY COLORED SECONDARY WING FEATHERS			COMPACT WINGS	
LEGS LOCATED IN THE MIDDLE OF BODY		<b>BODY COMPOSITION</b>	LEGS SIT FARTHER BACK ON BODY	
HIND TOE IS SMALL AND NOT LOBED			BIG FEET AND A LOBED HIND TOE	

OBJECTIVE: Provide an overview of public land hunting.

BACKGROUND: Most LtH participants are exclusively public land hunters or plan to hunt public land when they begin hunting. Providing a basic overview of public land hunting fosters support and helps assist new/perspective hunters navigate through public land hunting.

**ILLINOIS**  
**LEARN to HUNT**  
**TIPS FOR HUNTING PUBLIC LAND**

- 1 DO YOUR HOMEWORK:** All public areas throughout Illinois have different regulations for permits and lotteries. Make sure you are up to date on regulations for your area.
- 2 GO SCOUT!** Public lands can often be traveled by many hunters. Scouting is very beneficial to find indications of animal sign as well as get a feel for the area and where you might want to set up.
- 3 BE AWARE:** there will more than likely be other hunters in the area throughout the season. A good rule of thumb is to be far enough away from them as you would want them to be from you when hunting.
- 4 RESPECT THE LAND:** understand why it's there. Be courteous. Pick up your trash and make sure the area is cleaner than when you arrived.
- 5 LEARN ABOUT THE LAND:** the topography and how it can affect your hunt is important! Has a prescribed burn affected the area? Are there native grasses? Is there water in the area? Ask yourself these kind of questions!

**GET OUT THERE AND ENJOY IT!**

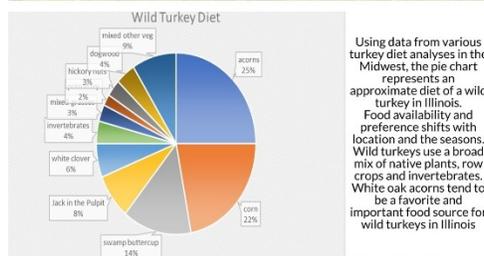
OBJECTIVE: Provide an overview and history of the Eastern Wild Turkey in Illinois.

BACKGROUND: Many new/perspective and existing hunters are unaware of the conservation success story of wild turkeys in Illinois.

ILLINOIS LEARNtoHUNT  
www.learnthuntill.com

Get to know the **EASTERN WILD TURKEY**  
*Meleagris gallopavo sylvestris*

Habitat: Forest with open areas  
Active: Diurnal - Roosts in trees at night  
Ground nester: 10-15 eggs, young=poults  
Avg. home range: 1,000-5,000 acres



Key Attributes  
Vision = A+  
Hearing = B-  
Smell = F  
Wariness = A  
Reproductive Potential = A  
Survival = C

**R Strategist = Higher reproductive output, lower survival**



Male turkeys are called gobblers or Toms when mature. Immature males are called jakes. Note the brightly colored head, darker plumage and larger size than the hen.

Female turkeys are called hens and are about half the size of adult males. Hens are more cryptic with duller plumage to help hide when nesting.



Male turkeys will "strut" in open areas to try to attract breeding hens. This involves puffing up the feathers and drumming/spitting. The drum is one of the lowest frequency natural noises in Illinois and can only be heard from very nearby. "Beards" made of modified feathers, spurs and snoods can all be used to help judge age of males.

ILLINOIS LEARNtoHUNT  
www.learnthuntill.com

# PUBLIC DUCK AND GOOSE HUNTING AREA PERMIT

## APPLICATION DATES

1st Lottery August 16-31

2nd Lottery September 1-15

3rd Lottery September 16-28

- ▶▶ First-come, first-served permits - Hunters can acquire additional permits on a first-come first-served basis beginning at 8:00 a.m. on October 1st. Permits will remain available until reserved permit quotas are depleted or until 72 hours prior to the hunt date.

You have 5 hunt area choices with 5 dates per hunt area. You may select the same area more than once to increase your date choices. Duck and goose permits are separate, you may apply for and receive up to 5 of each.

For more information, refer to the Illinois DNR's website.

# Free Upland Game Permit

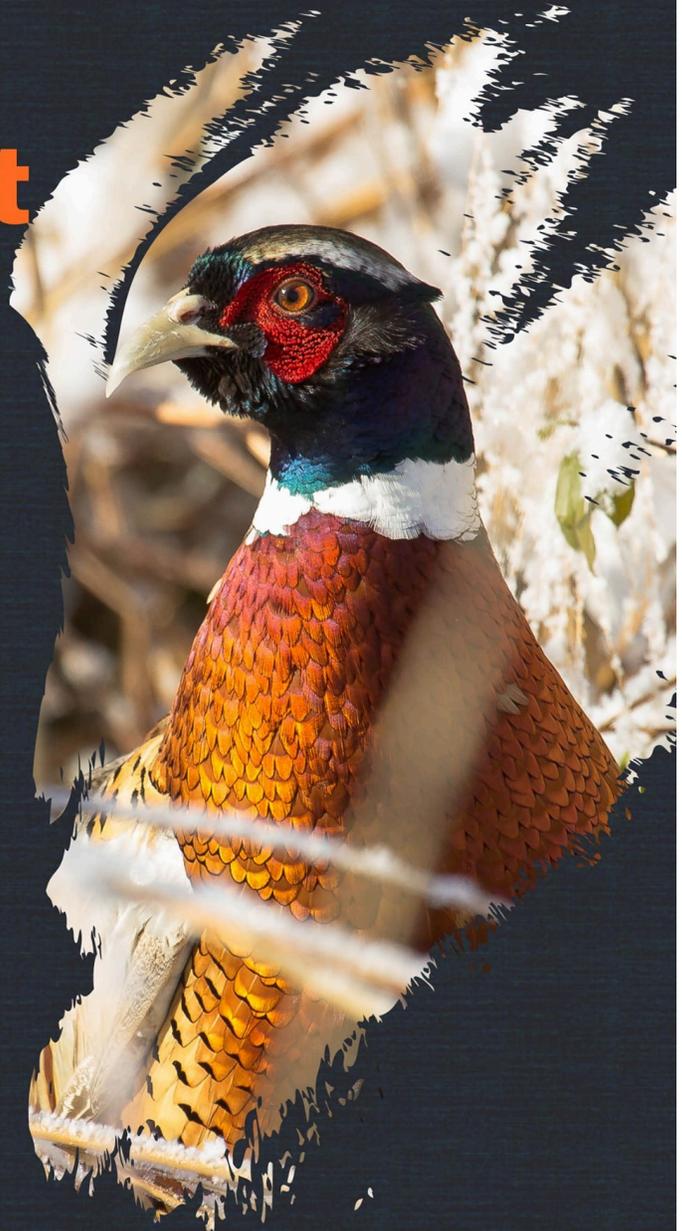
## APPLICATION DEADLINE

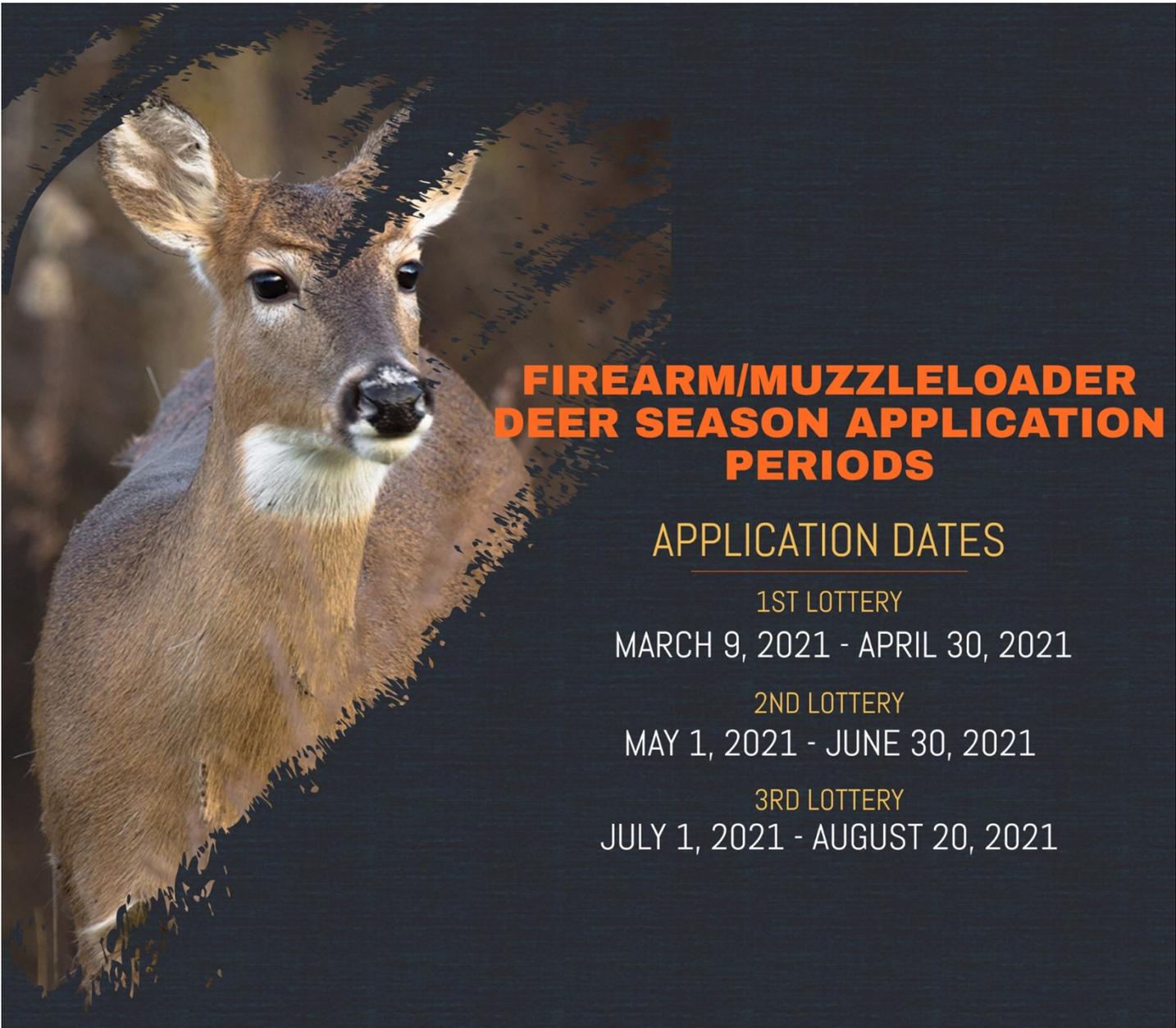
Aug 1 - Aug 31

You may choose up to six different hunt areas with four hunting dates for each hunt area choice. You may list the same hunt area more than once to increase your choice of dates. We encourage you to use all 24 hunt area/date choices to increase your chances of drawing a permit.

The lottery will take place in early Sept. and all applicants will need to check the Reservation Inquiry System on the IDNR website to see if they received a permit.

Refer to the Illinois DNR's website for more information.





**FIREARM/MUZZLELOADER  
DEER SEASON APPLICATION  
PERIODS**

**APPLICATION DATES**

1ST LOTTERY

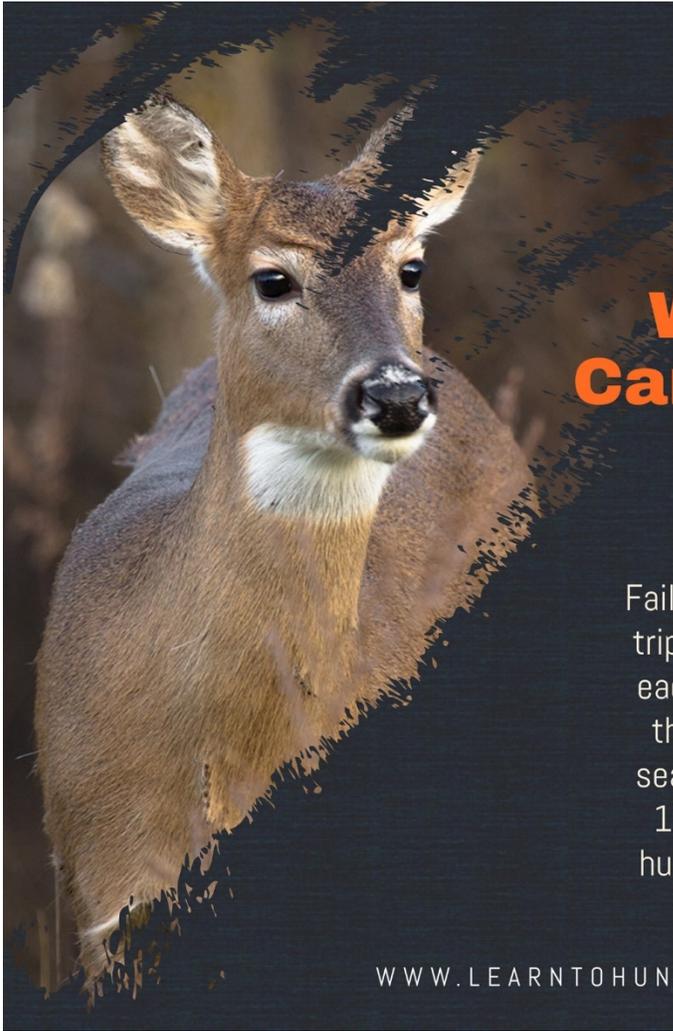
MARCH 9, 2021 - APRIL 30, 2021

2ND LOTTERY

MAY 1, 2021 - JUNE 30, 2021

3RD LOTTERY

JULY 1, 2021 - AUGUST 20, 2021



## Windshield Card Reporting Deadline

February 15th

Failure to report harvest/hunter trips ONLINE by February 15 of each year (or two weeks after the season closes for those seasons ending after February 1) will result in forfeiture of hunting privileges at that site for the following year.

WWW.LEARNTOHUNTIL.COM

# PHEASANT & QUAIL SEASON

## SEASON DATES

North zone Nov 7 - Jan 8

South zone Nov 7 - Jan 15

Zones for rooster pheasant, quail, Hungarian partridge are divided by U.S. Route 36 from the Indiana state line to Springfield, Illinois Route 29 from Springfield to Pekin, and Illinois Route 9 from Pekin to Dallas City, then due west to the Mississippi River



Refer to the Illinois Digest of Hunting and Trapping Regulations 2020-2021 for more information.

## Illinois Hunter Survey 2019-20 Season



Illinois Department of Natural Resources  
Division of Wildlife Resources

**I ILLINOIS**  
Illinois Natural History Survey  
PRAIRIE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

&

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. This study is funded by the federal Wildlife Restoration Fund through your purchase of sporting arms and ammunition.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!**

All of your responses will be kept confidential.

Please return this survey in the postage-paid return envelope provided.

- 
1. Did you purchase a hunting license for the 2019-2020 hunting season?  Yes  No
2. Which of the following best describes how often you purchase an Illinois hunting license?  
 Every year  Most years  Occasional years  Rarely  Never
3. Did you purchase a Federal Migratory Duck Stamp for the 2019-2020 hunting season?  
 Yes  No
4. Did you purchase a state waterfowl stamp for the 2019-2020 hunting season?  Yes  No
5. Did you apply for a permit (for example, a duck blind, firearm deer permit on public land, free upland pheasant hunt, etc.) through the Illinois DNR's lottery application system for the 2019-2020 hunting season?  
 Yes  No
- 5a. Were you successful in drawing a permit?  Yes  No
6. Did you hunt during the 2019-2020 season?  Yes  No
- 6a. What species did you hunt for during the 2019-2020 season?  
 Deer  Pheasant  Duck  Quail  Rabbit  
 Turkey  Duck  Goose  Dove  Squirrel
- 6b. If you hunted deer during the 2019-2020 hunting season, which of the following methods of take did you use?  
 Shotgun  Muzzleloader  Compound Bow  Traditional Bow  Crossbow
7. Did you hunt public or private land during the 2019-2020 hunting season?  
 Public land  Private land  Both
- 7a. If Both, which of the following did you hunt most often during the 2019-2020 hunting season?  
 Public land  Private land
8. This past year, did you search for any wild game recipes?  Yes  No
9. Did you prepare any meals using wild game you harvested?  Yes  No
10. Did you share your harvest with any non-hunting friends?  Yes  No

11. What prevented you from hunting more often during the 2019-2020 hunting season?

	Not at all	A little	A moderate amount	A lot	A great deal
Costs of license/permits	1	2	3	4	5
Costs of hunting equipment	1	2	3	4	5
Access to public hunting land close to home	1	2	3	4	5
Access to hunting opportunities close to home	1	2	3	4	5
Crowding at public sites	1	2	3	4	5
Work/family commitments	1	2	3	4	5
Safety concerns	1	2	3	4	5
Hunting skills/knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of people to hunt with	1	2	3	4	5
Childcare obligations	1	2	3	4	5
Other recreational activities take up my free time	1	2	3	4	5
My friends/family don't approve of me hunting	1	2	3	4	5
Health problems	1	2	3	4	5
Hunting regulations are too confusing	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of motivation	1	2	3	4	5

12. How likely are you to discuss the following with friends, family, or acquaintances?

	Not at all	A little	A moderate amount	A lot	A great deal
Hunters make important financial contributions to wildlife conservation	1	2	3	4	5
Recruiting the next generation of hunters is important for the future of hunting	1	2	3	4	5
Hunting is a critical tool to manage wildlife populations	1	2	3	4	5
Hunting provides a sustainable source of food	1	2	3	4	5
Hunters play an important role as advocates for wild things and wild spaces	1	2	3	4	5

13. What motivates you to go hunting?

	Not at all	A little	A moderate amount	A lot	A great deal
I hunt to be away from the everyday routine of home	1	2	3	4	5
Get away from crowded areas	1	2	3	4	5
Test my abilities	1	2	3	4	5
Develop my skills	1	2	3	4	5
Experience challenge	1	2	3	4	5
Share quality time with friends and family	1	2	3	4	5
Provide wild game for my family	1	2	3	4	5
Provide meat from a sustainable source	1	2	3	4	5
Provide wild game for friends	1	2	3	4	5

**Background Information**

1. How many years have you hunted in Illinois? \_\_\_\_ Years
2. At what age did you first hunt? \_\_\_\_ Years-old
3. Please give your age. \_\_\_\_ Years-old
4. What is your gender? \_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_ Female

Comments



**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND ASSISTANCE!**

**Please return this survey in the postage-paid envelope provided.**

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, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62701-1787, (217) 782-7616 or the Officer of Human Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C. 20240.



ILLINOIS NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY

Prairie Research Institute  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

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Dear Illinois Hunter,

Your name was randomly selected from the list of 2019 Illinois hunting license purchasers. We are asking you to provide information about your activities during the 2019-2020 hunting seasons in Illinois. **Even if you did not hunt in Illinois during the 2019-2020 seasons, we ask that you please take a few minutes to complete the portions of the questionnaire that pertain to you.** A postage paid envelope is providing for returning the questionnaire to us.

This study, jointly conducted by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the Illinois Natural History Survey, is an effort to learn about hunting activities in Illinois. Results of this study will help wildlife managers make decisions to improve hunting opportunities. **Your responses are voluntary and completely confidential.** By responding you will help us more effectively manage wildlife and hunting in Illinois.

**If you do not wish to participate, please return the blank questionnaire so we can remove your name from our mailing list.**

If you have any questions regarding this study, please call us at (217) 300-0875.

Sincerely,

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

Craig A. Miller  
Human Dimensions Research Program

1816 South Oak Street,  
Champaign, Illinois 61820 USA