



# 2011 Hunter Education Annual Report



Hunter Education,  
because  
***Safe Hunting is  
No Accident!***



Hunter Education helps to provide a solid foundation for hunters to build a lifetime of experiences, time afield with family and friends, being out in nature and enjoying the world around them. Hunter Education is one of the first steps on the hunter's path, a path that they can walk for a lifetime, making and sharing hunting and outdoor memories.

## Summary

The hunter education program saw a marked increase in demand in 2011. Annually, about 16,000 to 17,000 students graduate from about 750 classes statewide. In 2011, the total number of students increased to 20,476 and the number of classes exceeded 800 statewide. Hunters born before January 1, 1949 are not required to have hunter education in Colorado, yet 26 students who completed hunter education in 2011 were born before 1949. Hunter education classes are taught by a dedicated group of over 450 volunteer hunter education instructors and Colorado Parks and Wildlife employees.

Hunter education classes are available in a variety of formats, including traditional classes that meet several times, weekend classes that run Saturday and Sunday and internet-based classes that allow the students to complete some of the course work on their own using one of three approved courses.

Traditional hunter education classes require a **minimum** of 10 contact hours, along with a live fire session and a written exam. Internet-based classes credit six hours of class time for the online work and require either a final classroom session or sessions comprising a minimum of four contact hours with an instructor. These sessions cover Colorado hunting laws and regulations, wildlife identification, firearms safety and hands-on exercises, a live-fire session and the written exam. Bowhunter education classes are also available in traditional classroom and internet course formats.

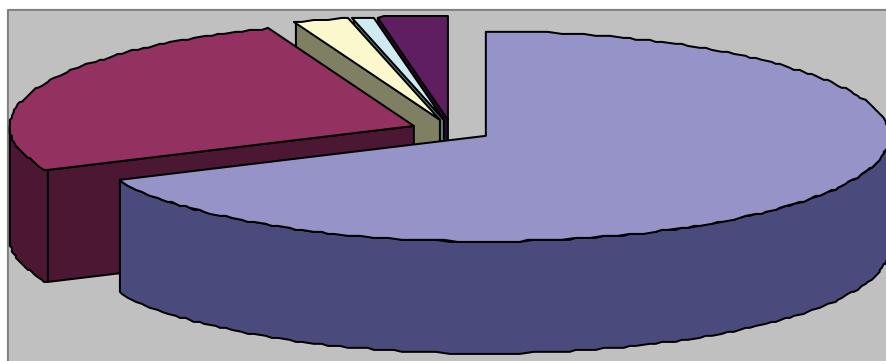
We offer hunter education classes in a variety of ways is to help make it as easy as possible for everyone that wants to attend a class. We make an effort to meet different schedules, learning styles and other needs. In some areas, volunteer hunter education instructors offer women-only classes, youth classes and Spanish-language classes to meet demand.

There have been many several factors contributing to the increase in demand for hunter education. Hunter education instructors have reported that students say they signed up to learn about firearms safety. This may be related to the increase number of gun sales across the country in the last few years. Instructors also report more adults taking the class alongside their children as a family event. The increase in small game access made possible through the Walk-In Access program is making it easier for people to get out and hunt small game. Another reason people are taking hunter education may be related to changing dietary preferences favoring local and sustainable foods, and wild game is about as good as it gets.

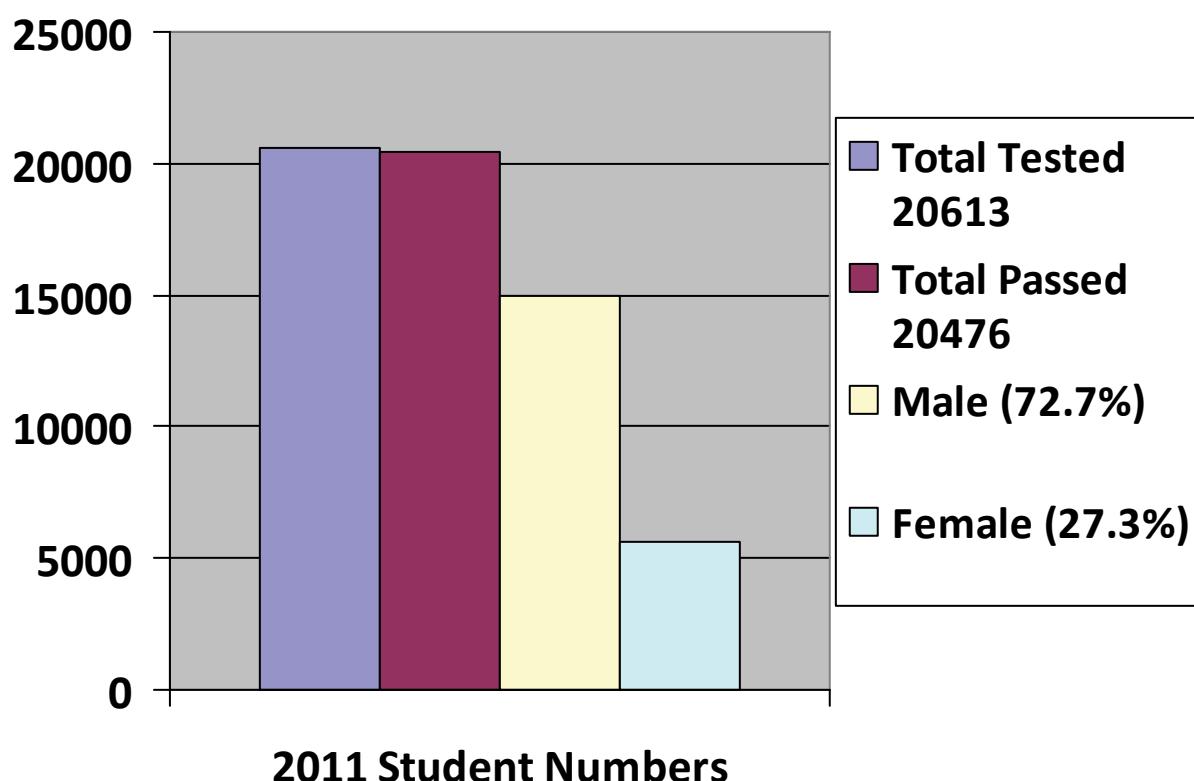
With the increasing demand for hunter education classes, the hunter education program encourages anyone interested in passing on the hunting and conservation heritage to contact Colorado Parks and Wildlife about becoming a volunteer hunter education instructor.

# Class Types and Student Numbers

A total of 823 classes were taught in 2011. Internet-based classes made up 26 percent of all classes. This increase shows that students like the flexibility of completing some of the course work online and at their own pace. Internet classes are also popular with instructors as it allows them to spend more time with hands-on skills activities. Hands-on firearms safety activities are mandatory in internet-based class conclusion courses.



- Traditional - 561**
- Internet - 215**
- Bowhunter Education - 18**
- Women Only - 6**
- Youth - 23**



## 2011 Hunting Incidents

The following table summarizes hunting incidents reported in 2011. A hunting incident is an event involving a firearm, archery equipment or other manner of take that results in an injury requiring medical attention.

Hunter education classes use these summaries for teaching purposes. We ask students to consider how just a moment taken by the shooter or victim to unload a firearm, double-check the area, look twice to positively identify the target or ascertain that the gun's safety was on could have prevented these incidents from ever occurring.

Date	County	Fatal	Summary of Incident
01/11/2011	Bent	Yes	Eight-year-old boy hunting with father and grandfather went to retrieve hit duck alone. A shot was heard and the boy did not return to the blind. The others found him unresponsive. He was pronounced dead at the hospital. Investigation showed that the boy had caught the gun on a tamarisk bush and was hit when the gun discharged.
01/25/2011	Lincoln	Yes	Fifty-nine-year-old year old male was hunting rabbits. He left his vehicle in road and crossed fence in to field. When returning, with the safety off, the trigger apparently caught on the fence, discharging the shotgun at the man's chest. Careless handling of firearms.
02/06/2011	Pueblo	No	A hunter, age 37, was loading shotgun while sitting in the back seat of truck while hunting geese and discharged the shotgun. The shot went through the front seat and struck his 11-year-old-son, causing serious wounds to left arm. Several surgeries saved the arm. Loaded firearm in motor vehicle, careless handling of firearms.
02/13/2011	Mesa	No	Shooter/victim was hunting coyotes with loaded .22 revolver resting on his leg. When shooter reached back to move rifle sling off of shoulder, he grabbed revolver with right hand, discharging the gun. Bullet passed through left thigh. Careless handling of firearms.
04/10/2011	Otero	No	A group was hunting on a commercial park. The victim was below the shooter and had fallen behind the group when a pheasant flew through the group. The shooter swung and fired, striking victim in head, neck, shoulder and chest at a distance of less than 50 yards. Swinging on game, zones of fire.
09/16/2011	Jackson	No	A muzzleloader hunter, a passenger in vehicle, thought he saw an elk. He got out of vehicle and watched what he thought was an elk antler, but what turned out to be the tip of a recurve bow limb. The shooter assumed the movement he saw behind the "antler" was a cow elk and fired from the road. The bullet grazed victim across chest and hit her bicep. Victim was in camo and walking along with her father who was bowhunting. Failure to identify target.
11/13/2011	Arapahoe	No	A 10-year-old who was along to watch a hunt with three adults, another youth and a guide at a commercial hunting facility, fell behind the group. A 62-year-old and 17-year-old fired at a flying chukar that went through the group. Pellets from one or both shots struck the child, causing wounds described as superficial. Swinging on game.
11/18/2011	Routt	No	The shooter and victim were hunting elk 15 to 20 minutes after sunset. The victim was guiding and trying to push elk towards shooter. The shooter said he thought he was shooting at a coyote and shot victim in shoulder. Failure to ID target, careless handling of firearms, low light
12/16/2011	Weld	No	22 year old female hunting geese with family caught shotgun on blind and dropped the gun, which discharged. Pellets struck shooter's father, 47 years of age, in the hip and buttocks. Victim was airlifted to hospital for treatment of the wounds. Careless handling of firearms.
12/23/2011	Logan	No	The shooter and victim were hunting pheasants along a canal ditch. The victim had moved out of ditch up onto canal ahead of the other hunters. A rooster flushed and shooter fired at bird, not realizing the victim was in line of fire. The victim was struck by multiple pellets from about 30 yards. Swinging on game, zones of fire.

Careless handling of firearms continues to be the leading cause of hunting incidents in Colorado. The loaded firearm in a motor vehicle could also be categorized as a careless handling incident. Since the loaded firearm incident occurred during a waterfowl hunt ,it is included in the waterfowl category on the second graph. It is important that hunters remind themselves to look around, keep track of hunting companions and other hunters in the area and to always control the muzzle of their firearms.

Hundreds of thousands of hunters spent millions of recreation days in the field in Colorado in 2011. The fact that there were only ten hunting incidents proved that hunting truly is among the safest of outdoor activities.

