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Increasing the number of women shooters who participate in hunting

# NWTF & NSSF

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Project funded in part from NSSF's Hunting Heritage Trust Grant Program 2019/2020



3/27/2020

National Wild Turkey Federation



Founded in 1973, the NWTF's mission remains relevant and focused: *the conservation of the wild turkey and the preservation of our hunting heritage*. NWTF's 10-year initiative, Save the Habitat. Save the Hunt. continues to gain momentum as volunteers, state and federal agencies, and outdoor industry join forces to create land access not previously open to hunting and mentored outdoor recreational opportunities to break the cycle of the national decline of hunters & anglers.

The goal of our project is to help women who already have firearm skills and knowledge use that information to expand their participation into hunting, thus increasing the number of women shooters who hunt.

## Survey

We set an objective to survey 2,000 women shooters, gauging their interest and identifying barriers to learning to hunt. We targeted four states (Ohio, Indiana, Nebraska & South Carolina) where NWTF partners in delivering strong R3 programming and state agency relationships. The administrators for this project are primarily NWTF R3 Coordinators. These co-funded positions are supported by NWTF and state wildlife agencies.

After receiving the agreement for this grant in July we began designing our survey and purchased licensing for an online platform in order to collect responses and utilize powerful tools for analyzing results. We also designed artwork to accompany the surveys on social media. We worked with industry partners to incentivize the survey as well. After testing the format and sharing it with professionals in the field we standardized the survey.

In July and August we contacted shooting ranges in each state to inform them of the project and to gain their support and assistance. Our goal was to survey their female patrons as well as utilize Eblasts, Facebook and Instagram to share links and QR codes to the survey. We created separate survey links and QR codes for each shooting facility/group we targeted. We also boosted posts and targeted Facebook audiences.

One of our first lessons learned was how difficult it is to get people to share surveys and to secure responses. Initially responses were low so we modified our artwork and supporting text for social media to include that the survey takes less than 2 minutes to complete and included the phrase "help us better understand your interests." Through this process we learned that there is a fine balance in providing information to potential respondents. For this case, when the artwork and text were direct and to the point, we had better responses. At first we targeted a very specific audience and painstakingly gave each range a separate piece of artwork, link and QR code. We eventually broadened our sample and created standard artwork and links that could be shared far and wide. We learned that

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this wasn't necessary because the survey platform would allow us to filter the responses by geographical areas, level of experience, etc... using one link, one piece of artwork and one QR code. Once we made this adjustment, our survey responses increased considerably. See survey below.



1. How often do you participate in shooting sports?

- ☐ Not in the last 12 months
- ☐ 1-3 days/year
- ☐ 4-10 days/year
- ☐ 11 or more days/year

2. Have you taken a new shooter to the range in the last 12 months?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

3. What types of firearms do you like to shoot?

- ☐ Shotguns
- ☐ Rifles
- ☐ Handguns
- ☐ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_

4. What types of shooting do you enjoy?

- ☐ Sporting Clays
- ☐ Trap
- ☐ Skeet
- ☐ Steel
- ☐ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_

5. Do you shoot archery?

- ☐ Yes

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☐ No

6. What type of archery equipment do you shoot?

☐ Long Bow

☐ Recurve Bow

☐ Compound Bow

☐ Crossbow

☐ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

7. Are you interested in hunting with your archery equipment?

☐ Yes

☐ No

8. How often do you go hunting?

☐ I have never been hunting

☐ Not in the last 12 months

☐ 13 days/year

☐ 4-10 days/year

☐ 11 or more days/year

9. What species have you hunted for?

☐ Upland Birds (pheasant, quail)

☐ Waterfowl (ducks, geese)

☐ Big Game (deer, elk, bear)

☐ Turkey

☐ Small Game (rabbit, squirrel)

☐ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

10. Are you interested in increasing the number of days you participate in hunting?

☐ Yes

☐ No

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11. What species are you interested in hunting for?

- ☐ Upland Birds (pheasant, quail)
- ☐ Waterfowl (ducks, geese)
- ☐ Big Game (deer, elk, bear)
- ☐ Turkey
- ☐ Small Game (rabbit, squirrel)
- ☐ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

12. What barriers do you have to participating in hunting?

- ☐ Not knowing where to go
- ☐ Not enough access to convenient, quality hunting land
- ☐ Lack of appropriate gear
- ☐ Lack of knowledge/skill
- ☐ Lack of people to go with
- ☐ Lack of comfort with firearms
- ☐ Unsure of license requirements
- ☐ Other (please specify)

13. How old are you?

- ☐ Under 18
- ☐ 18-24
- ☐ 25-34
- ☐ 35-44
- ☐ 45-54
- ☐ 55-64
- ☐ 65+

14. What is your zip code? \_\_\_\_\_


15. Please provide an email address if you are interested in learning about upcoming women's programs:

\_\_\_\_\_



# Social media samples

**Andrew Niedermeyer** ▸ Indiana Hunting™  
September 23 · 🌐



**NWTF-Indiana**  
September 23 · 🌐

Hello to the "Ladies of Indiana"! The NWTF needs your help. Please take a moment to complete this quick survey. Click on this link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WN2C6CC> as we want to better understand your outdoor interests. THANKS!! #NWTF #R3 #NSSF

**Nebraska Game and Parks Commission**  
September 25 · 🌐

**Calling All Ladies!**

Did you know that women are the fastest growing customer group in the shooting sports industry? The National Wild Turkey Federation and the National Shooting Sports Foundation | NSSF are interested in learning more about what outdoor skills women are interested in learning. It is our hope that your completion of this short survey will help us in our planning efforts to offer more outdoor recreation classes for women.

\*All survey entrants have a chance to win Cabela's gift cards!

Take the survey here: <https://fal.cn/349Pt>



**NWTF-Ohio**  
Published by Johanna Dart [?] · September 25 · 🌐

Have some gear on your wish list this fall? 🍂

Take a quick survey to help the National Wild Turkey Federation learn your interests, and be entered to WIN a Cabela's gift card! ✨

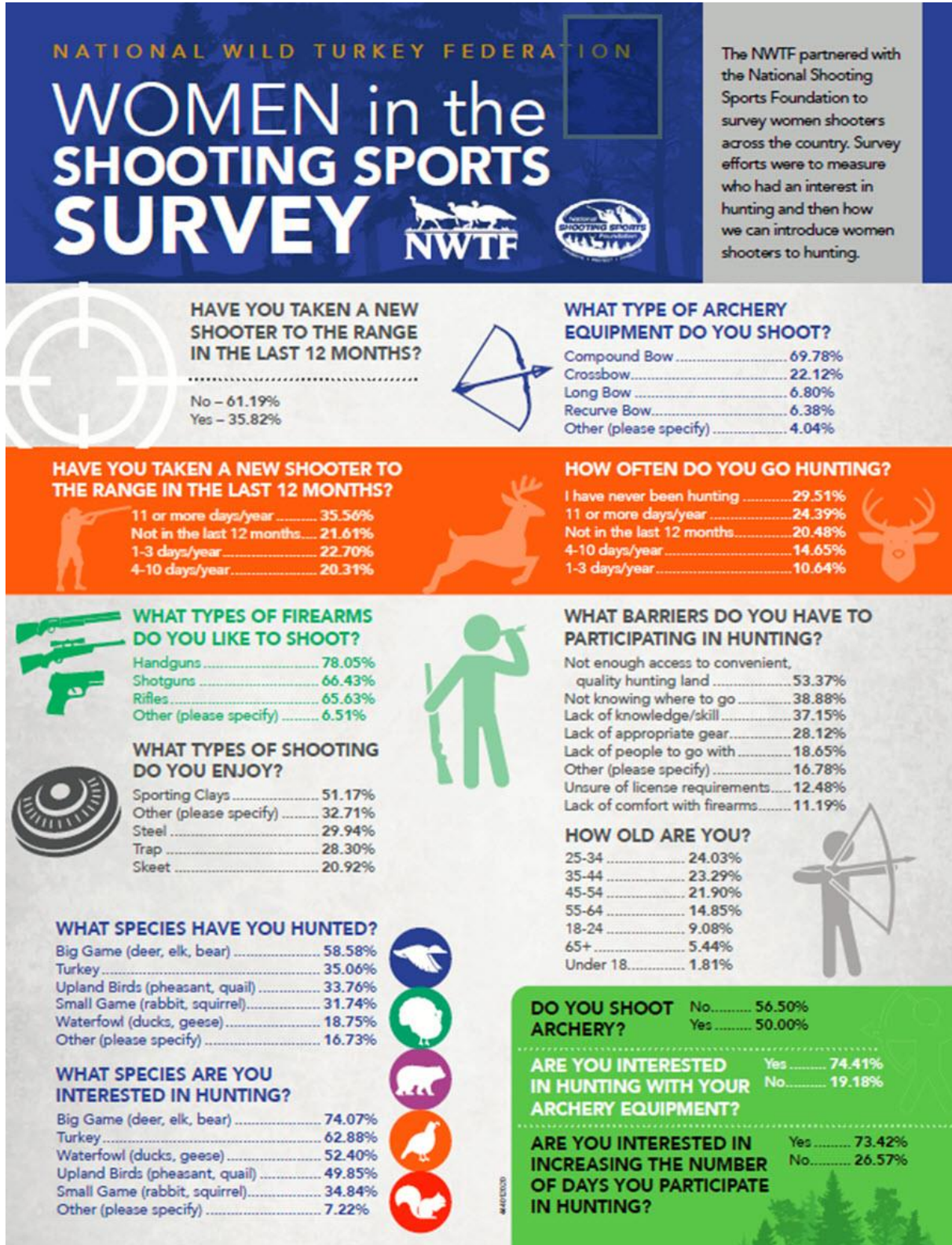
Visit [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/OH\\_shootingsports](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/OH_shootingsports) !



3,572 People Reached      174 Engagements      [Boost Again](#)

# Survey Results

We received 1,338 responses with a 93% completion rate.





# Connecting women in the shooting sports to hunting

Our second objective is to develop a series of classes, to take identified female shooters through the Outdoor Recreation Adoption Model (ORAM), from the awareness phase, all the way to the continuation with/without support phases.

State wildlife agencies and outdoor skill specialists assisted in development and delivery of opportunities to fit the indicated interests and address the barriers identified by respondents. Below is a state by state summary.

## Nebraska

After surveying was complete Nebraska sent monthly communications to all of the women who took the survey. These monthly communication pieces included upcoming women's hunting and shooting related opportunities. Below is a list of the events and attendance numbers:

- Women's Squirrel Hunt: 8 participants
- Hunting with Shotgun Series- Squirrel and turkey hunt advertisements- see attachment
- Vineyards and Venison- St. Paul, NE: 7 participants
- Vineyards and Venison- Ashland, NE: 14 participants
- Women's Novice Turkey Hunt (postponed due to COVID-19): 12 spots available, 6 registered so far
- Turkey Processing Workshop (postponed due to COVID-19): Registration just opened responses indicate women are interested in hunting turkey, deer and small game. NE will partner with Becoming an Outdoors Woman to begin advertising a squirrel clinic and hunt. Other events will include intro to turkey hunting and a turkey hunt (as part of the one year follow up).



## LEARN to HUNT with a SHOTGUN

Winter 2019 – Fall 2020

The Learn to Hunt Series program provides an engaging pathway focusing on the development of hunting skills. Programs are geared toward the new adult hunter wanting a safe, engaging, fun and educational experience. Participate in the entire series or jump in at your readiness level. Follow a path that interests you.

### Pheasant

**Ladies Pheasant Hunt Weekend Part 1**  
Clear Creek Lodge, Bartlett  
Nov. 6-7, 2020

Want to learn how to pheasant hunt? Learn how to upland game hunt successfully and safely, clean birds, shoot shotguns, AND so much more... all while enjoying a weekend with the ladies! This hunt will be on a controlled shooting area.

**Pheasants Forever Apprenticeship Part 2**  
Statewide 2019-20

Inexperienced hunters will be paired with a skilled bird hunter. As a team, you will develop an individual plan that will help successfully harvest birds in the wild. Gain knowledge on habitat, dog handling, hunting regulations, apparel, bird identification and other knowledge needed to hunt on your own.

### Squirrel

**Learn to Squirrel Hunt Part 1**  
Facebook Discussion

Date: Ongoing online  
November-December

Learn squirrel hunting at your own pace as your time allows. Experienced female hunters will post guidance and answer your questions. Ask to join the "Squirrel Hunters" Facebook group.

### Let's Go Squirrel Hunting Part 2

Bluestem Lake, Martell  
Dec. 15, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. \$10

Join us on a squirrel hunt. Squirrel hunting is a natural stepping stone toward hunting other game. Hunt will include a sight-in session, loaner gear, mentor, cleaning assistance and recipes in a fun atmosphere.

### Turkey

**Learn to Turkey Hunt Workshop Part 1**  
Free Webinar

Date: Will be posted in December on Facebook  
Unravel the excitement and challenge of spring turkey hunting. The events are designed for individuals with limited experience and ideal for those wanting to expand into this addicting pursuit. Topics to be covered include strategies, equipment, biology and more.

**Hunting & Calling Techniques Course Part 2**  
Southeast Community College, Hebron

Feb. 3, 10, 17 and 24, 6 p.m.-8 p.m. \$59  
Learn the basics of turkey hunting, including turkey biology, habitat, regulations, calls, equipment and techniques. Discuss what to wear and what to pack for the hunt. Experienced turkey hunters will teach the four-week hands-on course.



### Let's Go Turkey Hunting Part 3

Orleans and Brady  
April 24 - 26

A new hunter will go on a one-on-one hunt under the guidance of an experienced hunter. Learn how to hunt, gain knowledge on consumptive outdoor recreation and how to put wild game on the table. Hunters are encouraged to provide their own ammo and shotgun. Equipment is available for checkout if needed. Participants will experience the many facets of hunting, including firearm safety, blind and decoy setup, equipment, scouting, hunting and game cleaning.

### Grouse

**Cast and Blast**  
Calamus WMA, Burwell  
September 2020

Kick off the 2020 upland hunting season chasing grouse and camping in the picturesque sandhills. Cook game over an open fire, tie flies from feathers, and try your hand at fly fishing.

### Safety

**Ladies Hunter Education**  
Outdoor Education Center, Lincoln  
March 2, 2020

The Hunter Education course will be engaging through hands-on experiences that will include safe firearm handling, game trailing, treestand safety, first aid, planning and preparation. Attend with your lady friends or family members.

### Shotgun Shooting

**Ladies Day on the Range (2 events)**

Oak Creek Shooting Range, Brainard - June 20  
Weeping Water Gun Club, Weeping Water - May 30  
Learn how to safely and successfully shoot shotguns. We will be shooting trap and sporting clays.

### Shotgun Shooting Series

Outdoor Heritage Education Center, Louisville  
July 7 and 15  
Learn how to shoot and increase knowledge of shotguns, trap shooting, types of guns and ammo.

### Try Shotgunning

Fort Kearny Outdoor Expo May 9  
Missouri River Outdoor Expo, Sept. 18-19  
Try shotgunning for the first time in a safe and encouraging atmosphere with skilled instructors. The shotgun range will be a small piece of many activities offered at the Expo.

### Shotgun Fitting

Outdoor Education Center, Lincoln  
March 2020  
Learn from experts on how to select the perfect shotgun for your hunting and shooting sports endeavor.





## South Carolina

In SC survey responses indicate that 28% of respondents have never hunted and 21% have not hunted in the last 12 months. The majority (95%) were interested in increasing the number of days they hunt. Access to land was the most common barrier identified to hunting.

- In addition to online surveys we used local events to survey women in person. For example we held a 3D archery fun shoot in July (at a local shooting complex) and surveyed female participants in person to learn more about their interest in hunting. Turkey and upland birds are the species indicated as the most interest to hunt in our surveys.
- In the fall of 2019 survey participants were invited to participate in a dove and deer hunt.
- In February 2020 we partnered with Toney Creek Plantation to host a quail and pheasant hunt in the upstate of South Carolina for female shooters who had not hunted. We partnered novice hunters with experienced mentors and conducted a learn to hunt workshop prior to the hunt.
- Survey results from these participants revealed that overall, these hunters are interested in increasing their hunting opportunities but find that access, lack of knowledge/skill, and finding people to go with are their main roadblocks. This opportunity and future hunts with NWTF help to provide the knowledge needed, including information on public hunting opportunities, all while building a hunting network for the future.
- Participants from the February hunt were invited to participate in a mentored turkey hunt, which was postponed due to COVID-19. Participants will be invited to continue to participate in education opportunities and mentored hunts in 2020. They are eager to further their knowledge and skills by participating in future hunts hosted by NWTF.



## Indiana

The IN R3 Coordinator who began this project moved to a different state; however, the project was managed by other NWTF staff working in conjunction with the state agency. The results in the IN surveys show that the majority of respondents (37%) hunt more than 11 days a year with 21% who never hunted. Most have hunted big game, 76% of respondents are interested in increasing the number of days they hunt, and 65% are interested in hunting turkey. Land access was the barrier to hunting indicated most frequently followed closely by not knowing where to go and lack of knowledge of hunting skills.



- Information from survey results was used for targeted outreach to expand connectivity where interest was identified for events. Direct calls, IN DNR web page outreach, and



NWTF social media were used to promote events. A total of 5 events occurred averaging 10 women per event. Two learn to hunt events had 18 women in attendance. Additionally, 5 more events are planned that integrate shooting sports, learn to hunt, and mentor hunting. Lastly, 12 events are planned to integrate families and/or adults that will have a blended group of participants.



## Ohio

State survey responses indicated that the majority (35.56%) participate in shooting sports 11 or more days a year, and have never been hunting (36.67%). 68.89% of respondents would like to increase the number of days they participate in hunting. These responses further indicate that women in the state are interested in hunting big game (74.19%), turkey (58.06%) and small game (37.10%).

- Ohio partnered with an Outdoor Skills Specialist with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Wildlife to identify opportunities for participants. Due to the timing of the grant and associated deadlines, it was determined that linking the participants' stated shooting sports experience to a pheasant hunt would be fruitful in the time allotted. A multi-session course was developed, with a range session and a hunt session at locations in north-central Ohio. The range session was held February 8th and covered shotgun safety and range time, a mock hunt, and discussion on the hunt. The hunt session was held February 23rd, where participants warmed up with a round of sporting clays, went on a pheasant hunt, and learned to process the birds.







- Top motivations for learning to hunt were to improve shooting sports skills, the social interactions and learning with fellow interested women, harvesting local and sustainable foods, and wanting to be more self-sufficient and learn a new life skill.
- A follow-up opportunity is being planned for the fall, incorporating other species of interest.

## National efforts

Our next step is to share the results from this grant in the format of a template where we provide chapters with a step by step guide to connect female target shooters to educational opportunities and mentored hunts to encourage these programs across the country. We are also engaging other partners in our work; for example, we shared this concept with the Archery Trade Association in hopes to apply this concept to archery as well.

Our national Women in the Outdoors coordinator training event (June 11-15, 2020) was postponed due to COVID-19. Women who plan events across the country will convene at our national headquarters to discuss best practices and share ideas for female focused shooting and hunting programming. We hope to hold this event in the fall of 2020 where we will share findings from this project, the template mentioned previously, and encourage other states to conduct similar surveys and programming.

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## Summary and plans for future connections

Although COVID-19 caused our spring turkey hunts associated with this grant to be postponed, we are encouraging participants to continue hunting with local mentors and they will be invited to fall hunts as planned. We will continue to survey participants as we assist them through the ORAM and adapt our programming based on those results.

In conclusion, surveys indicate that the majority of female target shooters have never been hunting. The large majority of women surveyed would like to hunt more and the largest barrier to hunting is not having access to a quality convenient place to hunt. These results confirm that there is an opportunity to generate more hunting participants through the existing audience of female target shooters. Through multi-pronged marketing campaigns, educational and mentor hunt opportunities we will continue to identify female target shooters and expand their current firearm skills and knowledge into hunting. This has added another element to the R3 programming offered by NWTf and we are already seeing opportunities to grow these efforts nationwide.

For additional information on this report, please contact:

Mandy Harling  
mharling@nwtf.org  
National Director of Hunting Heritage Programs  
National Wild Turkey Federation  
770 Augusta Rd., Edgefield, SC 29824  
(803) 637-7510- Direct Line | [www.nwtf.org](http://www.nwtf.org)