

Access to Hunting Land in Illinois:
A survey of your views
Results Summary



THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!
All of your responses will be kept confidential.
Please return this survey in the postage-paid envelope provided.



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



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 hunting arms and ammunition.

Access to Hunting Land in Illinois:

A survey of your views

This questionnaire is part of a study to help wildlife managers learn about and provide hunting opportunities in Illinois. We are asking for your participation in this study to help guide programs that may help you and other hunters gain access to hunting lands in Illinois.

Illinois Department of Natural Resource (IDNR) wildlife managers are very interested in maintaining and enhancing opportunities for hunters to take to the field in Illinois. In order to gain accurate information about Illinois hunters, we are asking you to take a few minutes to complete this survey. Your views are important and give a better understanding of how hunters feel about their access to hunting land in Illinois. Please keep in mind that we are interested in everyone's responses, not just avid hunters or those in a certain area of Illinois!

This survey should take about 20 minutes to complete. The final question provides you with an opportunity to share with us any additional comments you may have about land access and hunting in Illinois.

Please complete this questionnaire at your earliest convenience. If you feel you have received this survey in error, please pass it along to the adult hunter in your household with a birthday closest to today's date. When you have completed the questionnaire, seal it in the postage-paid envelope provided and drop it in any mailbox.

**Your responses will remain confidential
and will never be associated with your name.**

If you have any questions or comments about this study, please contact Linda Campbell, Survey Administrator, at (217) 244-5121 or write her at the Illinois Natural History Survey, 1816 S. Oak St., Champaign, IL, 61820.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE!

If you choose not to complete the questionnaire, please make a note in the final question and return the survey in the postage-paid envelope included.

Your hunting activities. In order to design programs that benefit the greatest number of Illinois hunters, we must first know why and how hunters hunt. The following questions will help us learn about your hunting activities. Please consider only your hunting experiences in Illinois; do not consider hunting in other states or countries.

1. For how many years have you hunted in Illinois? **Range 0-82/Avg. 27** years *n*=3,199

2. Over the time you have been hunting in Illinois, how frequently have you purchased an Illinois Hunting license and/or habitat stamp? (Please check one.) *n*=3,236

- 84% Every year
- 8% About 4 out of every 5 years
- 4% About 2 or 3 out of every 5 years
- 1% About 1 out of every 5 years
- 0.2% Never
- 3% I am not sure.

3. How important is hunting to you, compared to your other recreational activities? (Please check one.) *n*=3,241

- 33% My most important recreational activity
- 54% One of the more important recreational activities I participate in
- 11% No more important than any other recreational activity
- 3% Less important than most of my other recreational activities
- 0.4% Not at all important to me as a recreational activity

4. Considering all of your other recreational activities, how many substitutes do you have for hunting? In other words, if you could not participate in hunting, how many other different recreational activities are there that you enjoy doing just as much or more? (Please check one.) *n*=3,235

- 21% I have no recreational substitutes for hunting.
- 49% I have only a few recreational substitutes for hunting.
- 24% I have some recreational substitutes for hunting.
- 6% I have many recreational substitutes for hunting.

5. Many factors influence how much time individuals are able to spend hunting in a year. Please rank the following items from 1 to 9 to indicate how much influence each factor has over how often you hunt in Illinois. Indicate the item with the most influence with a 1 and the item with the least influence with an 9.

Percentage of respondents who ranked the option as #1.

- 39%** Time demands of my job *n*=1,169
- 28%** Time demands of my family obligations *n*=831
- 15%** My ability to access hunting land in Illinois *n*=443
- 18%** My ability to access hunting land close to my home *n*=533
- 6%** The complexity of hunting regulations in Illinois *n*=185
- 6%** The cost of hunting licenses, equipment and other items *n*=174
- 13%** Participation of my friends and family in hunting *n*=374
- 8%** Game species available to hunt in Illinois *n*=231
- 9%** The size of game populations in Illinois *n*=277

6. Which of the following species do you most prefer to hunt in Illinois? (Please check one.)
n=2,868

- 67%** White-tailed deer
- 5%** Small game (squirrel, rabbit, etc.)
- 11%** Upland birds (pheasant, partridge, quail, etc.)
- 4%** Wild turkeys
- 2%** Doves
- 9%** Waterfowl (ducks and geese)
- 1%** Furbearers (fox, raccoon, etc.)
- 2%** I am not sure.

7. On which of the following types of land do you most often hunt your most preferred species in Illinois? (Please check one.) *n*=3,124

- 19%** Private land which I own
- 58%** Private land which I do not own, but on which I hunt for free
- 7%** Private land which I pay to access (leased, membership, outfitter controlled, etc.)
- 15%** Public land owned by the state or federal government
- 1%** I am not sure.

8. What is the maximum distance you would be willing to travel to hunt your most preferred species within the state of Illinois? (Please indicate.) **n=3,192**

I would be willing to travel up to **Range 0-2000/Avg. 98** miles to hunt in Illinois.

9. How many days did you spend hunting your most preferred species in 2008? (Please indicate.) **n=3,205**

I hunted my most preferred species for **Range 0-180/Avg. 18** days in 2008.

10. How satisfied are you with your current ability to access hunting land in Illinois for your most preferred species? (Please circle one.) **n=3,208**

		Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied		Very unsatisfied		I am not sure
Very satisfied						
21%	15%	25%	17%	18%		4%

11. Do you own land in Illinois for which the primary purpose is hunting and/or wildlife-related recreation? (Please check one.) **n=3,192**

17% Yes

83% No (Please skip to question 13.)

12. Where is the land you own for hunting and/or wildlife-related recreation in Illinois located? (Please check one.) **n=748**

28% Adjacent to my primary residence

35% In the same county as my primary residence

25% Less than 100 miles from my primary residence

12% More than 100 miles from my primary residence

13. Approximately how much money do you spend, in total, to hunt in Illinois each year? Include fees to access hunting land, license fees, travel costs, equipment, lodging, etc. **n=3,081**

I spend approximately \$ **Range 0-15,000/Mean \$699** to hunt in Illinois annually.

14. How much of the total amount you indicated in question 13 is spent to access hunting land in Illinois? Please include site fees, leasing fees, outfitting fees, club memberships, etc. for both public and private lands. **n=3,017**

I spend approximately \$ **Range 0-12,000/Mean \$174** to access hunting land in Illinois annually.

15. For which of the following species was it most difficult for you to access hunting land in Illinois in the last year? (Please check one.) **n=2,965**

- 30%** White-tailed deer
- 5%** Small game (squirrel, rabbit, etc.)
- 19%** Upland birds (pheasant, partridge, quail, etc.)
- 7%** Wild turkeys
- 3%** Doves
- 11%** Waterfowl (ducks and geese)
- 1%** Furbearers (fox, raccoon, etc.)
- 25%** I am not sure.

16. How do you feel your access to hunting lands for each of the following species has changed over the past 5 years? (Please check one for each season.)

Season	n	Increased	Stayed the same	Decreased	I did not hunt these species.
a. White-tailed deer	3,123	12%	42%	36%	10%
b. Small game (squirrel, rabbit, etc.)	3,013	4%	39%	32%	25%
c. Upland birds (pheasant, quail, etc.)	3,014	4%	25%	41%	31%
d. Wild Turkeys	2,969	9%	29%	23%	39%
e. Doves	2,921	4%	30%	24%	42%
f. Waterfowl (ducks and geese)	2,927	4%	22%	21%	53%
g. Furbearers (fox, raccoon, etc.)	2,908	3%	19%	13%	65%

Potential land access programs in Illinois. In this section, we describe several potential land access programs in Illinois. These programs may offer additional ways for Illinois hunters to access land, but all participation from hunters and landowners would be voluntary. Keep in mind, these programs are possibilities, not existing programs. Your responses will help us understand whether you would participate in these programs, and if they would improve your opportunity to hunt in Illinois. Each program is different, so please read each description carefully and answer all questions for each program. Please respond as if the program had existed during the most recent year in which you hunted.

PROGRAM #1 – In exchange for exclusive access to a designated area of private land for a set time period (more than 1 day), hunters will pay a monetary access fee directly to landowners. Fees will be set by IDNR, charged per acre accessed, and will be consistent throughout the state. IDNR will provide a list of participating landowners to hunters, but hunters must make contact themselves. The number of hunters allowed will be determined by the landowner, and any special harvest criteria will be based on IDNR guidelines (such as: antlerless harvest only, reduced daily bag limits). Harvest criteria may be different than statewide regulations.

17. Would you participate in this program? (Please check one.) *n*=3,221

33% Yes 37% No 30% I am not sure.

18. How would this program affect your current ability to access hunting land in Illinois? (Please circle one.) *n*=3,182

		Neither increase nor decrease		Decrease greatly		I am not sure.
Increase greatly						
17%	19%	27%	4%	11%		22%

19. How satisfied would you be with your access to hunting land under this program? (Please circle one.) *n*=3,173

		Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied		Very unsatisfied		I am not sure
Very satisfied						
11%	18%	22%	5%	15%		28%

20. How would this program affect the time you spend hunting in Illinois? (Please circle one.) *n*=3,148

Increase greatly		Neither increase nor decrease		Decrease greatly	I am not sure.
10%	20%	36%	4%	11%	20%

PROGRAM #2 – In exchange for exclusive access to designated areas of private land for a set time period (more than 1 day), hunters will be required to complete a set number of hours of volunteer work at the site. Volunteer work may involve habitat management, manual labor, or other activities and will be directed by the landowner. Hunters may face harvest restrictions different from statewide regulations.

21. Would you participate in this program? (Please check one.) *n*=3,208

35% Yes **39%** No **26%** I am not sure.

22. How would this program affect your current ability to access hunting land in Illinois? (Please circle one.) *n*=3,136

Increase greatly		Neither increase nor decrease		Decrease greatly	I am not sure.
12%	20%	32%	4%	10%	22%

23. How satisfied would you be with your access to hunting land under this program? (Please circle one.) *n*=3,137

Very satisfied		Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied		Very unsatisfied	I am not sure
12%	18%	26%	4%	14%	26%

24. How would this program affect the time you spend hunting in Illinois? (Please circle one.) *n*=3,251

Increase greatly		Neither increase nor decrease		Decrease greatly	I am not sure.
10%	18%	36%	3%	11%	22%

PROGRAM #3 – Prior to hunting seasons, hunters will enter a lottery for daily access to public and private hunting sites on specific days during the hunting season. Hunters selected in the lottery will pay an access fee, be granted a party permit for a set number of individuals and may face harvest restrictions different from statewide regulations. Fees will go to IDNR to run the program, maintain sites, and purchase access to private lands.

25. Would you participate in this program? (Please check one.) *n*=3,211

28% Yes 48% No 23% I am not sure.

26. How would this program affect your current ability to access hunting land in Illinois? (Please circle one.) *n*=3,113

Increase greatly		Neither increase nor decrease		Decrease greatly	I am not sure.
8%	16%	34%	5%	15%	23%

27. How satisfied would you be with your access to hunting land under this program? (Please circle one.) *n*=3,117

Very satisfied		Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied		Very unsatisfied	I am not sure
7%	14%	29%	6%	19%	25%

28. How would this program affect the time you spend hunting in Illinois? (Please circle one.) *n*=3,116

Increase greatly		Neither increase nor decrease		Decrease greatly	I am not sure.
6%	14%	37%	4%	16%	23%

PROGRAM #4 – Hunters will purchase an annual access pass from IDNR which would allow non-exclusive access to enrolled private lands. IDNR will provide a list of participating landowner to hunters, but hunters must make contact to arrange permission themselves. The number of hunters allowed to access properties will be determined by landowners. Fees will go to IDNR to purchase access to private lands.

29. Would you participate in this program? (Please check one.) *n=3,153*

35% Yes 38% No 27% I am not sure.

30. How would this program affect your current ability to access hunting land in Illinois? (Please circle one.) *n=3,083*

Increase greatly		Neither increase nor decrease		Decrease greatly	I am not sure.
12%	20%	32%	4%	10%	22%

31. How satisfied would you be with your access to hunting land under this program? (Please circle one.) *n=3,083*

Very satisfied		Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied		Very unsatisfied	I am not sure
11%	18%	29%	4%	13%	25%

32. How would this program affect the time you spend hunting in Illinois? (Please circle one.) *n=3,073*

Increase greatly		Neither increase nor decrease		Decrease greatly	I am not sure.
10%	17%	37%	3%	10%	23%

33. Which of the programs described above would you be most in favor of implementing in Illinois? (Please check one.) *n=2,926*

19% Program #1
19% Program #2
8% Program #3
18% Program #4
36% I am not sure.

Information about you. In order for us to fully understand your responses to the previous questions, we need to know a few things about you. Remember that your responses are confidential and your name and address will not be linked with your responses in any way.

34. In what year were you born? **Range 1916-1999** *n=3,187*

35. In which Illinois county do you live? (Please indicate.) *n=3,251*

See table.

36. What is your occupation? (Please indicate.)

See table.

37. Are you **95%** male or **5%** female? (Please check one.) *n=3,251*

38. What is your highest level of education? (Please check one.) *n=3,155*

- 8%** Less than high school diploma
- 28%** High school graduate or GED
- 9%** Vocational or trade school
- 21%** Some college
- 10%** Associate's Degree (2 year)
- 15%** Bachelor's Degree (4 year)
- 8%** Graduate/Professional Degree

39. How many people are in your household? (Please indicate.) *n=3,184*

Avg. 4 people in household

40. How many people in your household hunt? (Please indicate.) *n=3,187*

Avg. 2 people in household hunt

41. How would you describe the area where you currently live? (*Please check one.*) **n=3,138**

- 19%** Rural setting, on a farm
- 24%** Rural setting, not on a farm
- 9%** Rural subdivision
- 10%** Suburban area on the edge of a town or city
- 24%** Within a small town (Population less than 25,000)
- 11%** Within an urban area (Population between 25,000 and 500,000)
- 3%** Within a metropolitan area (Population more than 500,000)

42. Please use the space below to provide any additional comments you may have about access to hunting land in Illinois.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

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

A summary of the study findings will be available at:

<http://www.inhs.illinois.edu/programs/hd/>

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND ASSISTANCE!

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 62702-1271, (217) 782-7616 or the Officer of Human Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C. 20240.