



U.S. ARMY COMBAT READINESS/SAFETY CENTER

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Oh deer!

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Who'd have known — deer are the most hunted animal in the United States.

According to most recent National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, more than 10 million deer hunters applied for hunting licenses during 2006. That figure is nearly four times greater than that for turkey, the second most-hunted species. In terms of population, approximately one in every 25 Americans over age 16 and eight in 10 registered hunters look for deer every year.

With that many firearms in the woods, safety in the field is critical.

"Soldiers who hunt need to treat their hunting weapons the same way they're trained to handle their service weapons," said Col. Kenneth Biland, deputy commander, U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center. "Those of us who enjoy hunting understand negligent discharges with a hunting rifle can be just as deadly as one with a service rifle."

Data supplied by the National Shooting Sports Foundation indicates hunters do recognize the importance of safety. Hunting is third on the top 10 list of safest sporting activities, bested only by camping and billiards.

Deer also present a real hazard on the road.

"Deer-car collisions are a serious threat to motorists throughout the United States," said Fred Harders, acting director, Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. "Based on information supplied by State Farm, Alabama motorists are involved in more than 20,000 deer versus car collisions each year. These accidents not only cause significant property damage, but can also result in serious injury or even death."

The estimated number of deer strikes in Georgia and Alabama, about 70,000 combined, pale in comparison to some other states. State Farm estimates a total 101,299 deer versus car incidents occurred in Pennsylvania during the second half of 2010 and first half of 2011. Nearly 2 percent of West Virginia drivers collided with deer during the past year, almost four times the national average.

Deer are most active at dawn and dusk, when visibility is limited or impaired due to the rising or setting sun, Harders said. The risk of deer-car collisions increases during late winter and early spring, which mark breeding season and the times of year when food supplies run low.

More information on winter safety is available at <https://safety.army.mil>.