

**HumanDimensions**

Research Program

Illinois Natural History Survey  
Prairie Research Institute  
University of Illinois at  
Urbana-Champaign



Federal Aid Project  
Number W-112-R-31  
Job Number 102.1  
Wildlife Restoration

Oct. 1, 2021-Sept. 30, 2022

**Natalie Phelps Finnie,**  
Director, Illinois Department  
of Natural Resources

**Jennifer Wellman,**  
Federal Aid Coordinator

**Mike Wefer,**  
Chief, Division of Wildlife  
Resources



# An Evaluation of the Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP)



Craig A. Miller, Ph.D.

Program Leader and Principal Investigator  
Human Dimensions Research Program  
Illinois Natural History Survey

Prepared by

Brent D. Williams, Craig A. Miller,  
Lauren J. Stephens, and Eric M. Walberg

INHS Technical Report 2023 (37)

September 6, 2022

Key words: IRAP, IRAP awareness, IRAP participation, IRAP behavior, IRAP landowners, IRAP participants, Illinois recreationist

Suggested Citation:

Williams, B.D, C.A. Miller, L.J. Stephens, and E.M. Walberg. 2022. An Evaluation of the Illinois Recreational Access Program. Job Completion Report, Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration W-112-R-31. Human Dimensions Research Program Report SR-21-01/INHS Technical Report 2023 (37). Illinois Natural History Survey, Champaign, IL. 177pp.

# AN EVALUATION OF THE ILLINOIS RECREATIONAL ACCESS PROGRAM (IRAP)

JOB COMPLETION REPORT

WILDLIFE HARVEST AND  
HUMAN DIMENSIONS RESEARCH PROGRAM

STATE OF ILLINOIS

PROJECT NUMBER: W-112-R-31  
STUDY 102  
JOB NO. 102.1

Craig A. Miller, Ph.D.  
Program Leader and Principal Investigator  
Human Dimensions Research Program  
Illinois Natural History Survey  
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Brent D. Williams, Craig A. Miller,  
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September 6, 2022

Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration  
W-112-R-31  
Illinois Department of Natural Resources

Natalie Phelps Finnie, Director  
Illinois Department of Natural Resources

Mike Wefer, Chief  
Division of Wildlife Resources

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# **An Evaluation of the Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP)**

## **Executive Summary**

### **IRAP Participants**

The results of IRAP participant survey suggest it is difficult to gain access to private property for hunting in Illinois and most respondents were unsuccessful in previous attempts to do so. Public land was used most often by respondents, even though private land was preferred, and in the absence of access to IRAP properties, hunters would rely mostly on public lands. Almost all, 95%, would hunt were it not for IRAP, though they feel IRAP is beneficial to Illinois and to them personally. The aspects with the greatest disparity in importance and satisfaction were the availability of IRAP properties close to home and seeing game species on the IRAP properties they had visited. Almost 90% would attempt to participate in IRAP again; among those would not, proximity of IRAP properties was the primary reason for not participating. Mean hunting experience in Illinois was 26 years, 89% purchase a hunting license annually, and 92% had hunted in the previous year. This indicates the usefulness of the program as a recruitment tool is likely limited to youth hunting activities as very few new hunters were identified. The IRAP program seems to spread the number of hunters across the landscape more than recruit new ones. Two-thirds were satisfied with the program overall and 12% were not satisfied.

### **IRAP Landowners**

Approximately 95% of the landowners surveyed reported they were currently enrolled in IRAP. The most frequent reasons for enrollment in the program were to improve habitat for wildlife, recruit youth & new hunters by providing a place for them to hunt, and to receive financial cost-share assistance for habitat projects, (77%, 75%, and 70%, respectively). Ninety percent respondents were satisfied with

the service provided by IDNR staff. Sixty-two percent evaluated to habitat improvements to their land as high or very high. The majority allowed hunters on their property prior to IRAP, and denied hunters asking for permission. They had done so because the property had been hunted by friends and family. About half had initial concerns about enrolling in IRAP, including the behavior of recreationists on their property, and personal liability, and 90% had their concerns met. Landowners seemed to be very satisfied with IRAP. Participants are satisfied with the program, want regular check-ins, and would prefer to know the names and times of those hunting their property.

### **Illinois Recreationists**

A minority of participants (26%) were aware of IRAP prior to receiving the questionnaire and only 7% had ever applied to hunt an IRAP property. Respondents preferred to access private land and hunted most often on private lands owned by another or themselves, but 80% felt it was difficult to gain access to private land. Most felt that landowners were becoming increasingly restrictive of access to their land. Eighty-eight percent were moderately or extremely supportive of the program. About a third wanted to participate in the program and were most interested in archery deer hunting and sport fishing. Two-thirds had been denied access to hunting private land previously, and 80% had paid to hunt private property. The most common reasons why respondents were unlikely to participate in IRAP were currently having access to private land, that they lacked free time, or they lacked interest. Even though hunters were not eager to participate in IRAP themselves, they were supportive of expanding opportunities offered by IRAP especially through youth and mentor programs. These activities could be used as a recruitment tool, but for respondents IRAP would be a means to increase hunter participation as IRAP would increase their participation. Though in its absence they would still hunt.

## **Illinois Landowners**

About 50% of landowners throughout Illinois felt that it is difficult to find places to hunt or recreate in Illinois, and 76% percent agreed that landowners have become less willing to grant permission to access their land, but only 25% agreed that some type of program is needed to improve access to private land. Just 26% of landowners were aware of IRAP before receiving our survey, and two-thirds were unaware that landowners who provide free access to their property have their liability reduce under Illinois. A majority of landowners (72%) currently allowed hunting on their property, 78% were satisfied with the behavior of the hunters. Only 4% of respondents indicated that they were likely to enroll in IRAP in the future; most had concerns about enrolling in IRAP, generally about the behavior of hunters on their property, personal liability, potential damage, and overall safety. Many landowners indicated they were unlikely to participate because they did not want strangers hunting on their property and that their land was for them and their families to use, and it was currently leased.

## **Background**

With 3.74% of the total acreage of the state in public ownership, Illinois ranks 47th in the proportion of public lands among states of the U.S. (U.S. Geological Survey Gap Analysis Project, 2022). A significant amount of this public land (451 mi<sup>2</sup>) lies in the Shawnee National Forest in southern Illinois (U.S.D.A Forest Service). This ratio of public to private land necessitates that recreation occurs primarily on private land. To address the growing need for land for recreation and the importance private land plays outdoor recreation, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) created the Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP).

The primary goal of this program is to increase public access to private lands and provide more outdoor recreation opportunities, as well as provide recruitment, retention, and reengagement in outdoor recreation. The program was initiated in 2011 under a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to connect interested recreationists with opportunities provided by landowners willing to open their land to specified recreation activities. In turn, landowners receive assistance with non-native species removal, prescribed burning, prairie plantings and timber stand improvement. Further, landowners received a stipend for participation; the amount is based on the number of acres enrolled. To date, the program has grown to include close to 27,000 acres of private land in 52 counties. Current program activities include hunting (youth turkey, spring turkey segments 3 & 4) upland, small game, waterfowl, youth shotgun deer, archery deer), fishing and boating, bird watching, wildlife photography and viewing.

## **Purpose**

The intent of this study was to (a) evaluate both recreation and landowner participants in the Illinois Recreation Access Program (IRAP), and b) investigate the attitudes and needs of Illinois recreationists and landowners as a whole toward access and enrollment of private lands for recreation use in Illinois.

## **Methods**

This study involved mail surveys of both recreationist and landowner participants in IRAP as well as statewide recreationists and landowners not necessarily involved in the program. Contact information for IRAP participants were provided by the IRAP program, Dynata provided names and addresses for statewide landowners, and contact information for hunters was provided by IDNR. Each of the four mail surveys were conducted using the same methods.

The IRAP Recreationist/Hunter sample consisted of 1,846 people who were enrolled in IRAP. The IRAP Landowner sample included 187 people who had land enrolled in IRAP. Both IRAP sample groups had the same mailing timeline. Subjects were first mailed the questionnaire (Appendices A.1 & B.1) and cover letter (Appendices A.2 & B.2) on January 28, 2022. The first thank you/reminder postcard mailing to non-respondents was sent on February 22, 2022 (Appendices A.5 & B.4). A second copy of the questionnaire and cover letter were mailed March 08, 2022 (Appendices A.3 & B.3). Non-respondents received a second reminder postcard March 31, 2022. Contact information for the IRAP recreationist/hunter sample did not include date of birth or ages. An explanatory note for parents with

instructions on how to complete the survey (Appendix A.4) was included with all IRAP Recreationist/Hunter questionnaire mailings.

The statewide recreationist sample consisted of 3,000 hunting license buyers randomly selected from the 2019 license database of IDNR. The Statewide Landowner sample (N = 2,494) was randomly selected from a list of private landowners in select counties (Appendix E) whose property contained 30 acres or more of timbered land. The initial mailed questionnaires (Appendices C.1 & D.1), cover letters (Appendices C.2 & C.3), and stamped return envelopes (hereafter referred to as “survey packet”) were mailed January 28, 2022, followed by a Thank you/Reminder postcard February 22, 2022 (Appendices C.4 & D.4). A second mailing of the survey packet (Appendices C.3 & D.3) was sent March 08, 2022 followed by a second Thank you/Reminder postcard March 31, 2022.

Survey instruments were developed by Human Dimensions Research Program researchers in cooperation with and approval of IRAP program staff.



# 1. IRAP Participant Survey

## Results

Of the initial 1,846 IRAP participants sampled and 131 were removed as undeliverable, resulting in a usable sample of 1,697 individuals. We received 599 completed questionnaires for a response rate of 35%.

### Participant Profile

Respondents were mostly male (93.8%) (Figure 1), had lived in Illinois a mean 38.3 years and were a mean 45.5 years old. Over 97% of respondents reported that they had internet access. Most respondents reported living in rural areas (26%) followed by small towns (22.4%) (Figure 2). About 57% of people had a total gross household income of \$90,000 or more, whereas more than forty percent (29.9%) had a household income of less than \$75,000 (Figure 3). This is higher than the state average in part because there is a disproportionate number of rural and small town IRAP participants whose incomes greater than \$90,000. Almost 50% of people had a bachelor's or master's degree and 29% had a high school education or G.E.D. (Figure 4).

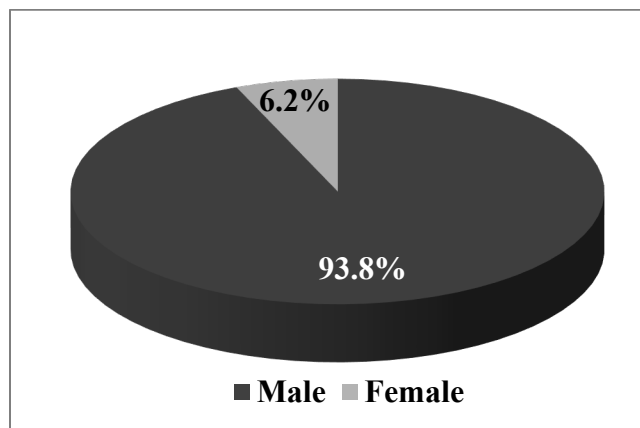


Figure 1. Gender distribution of respondents ( $n = 599$ ).

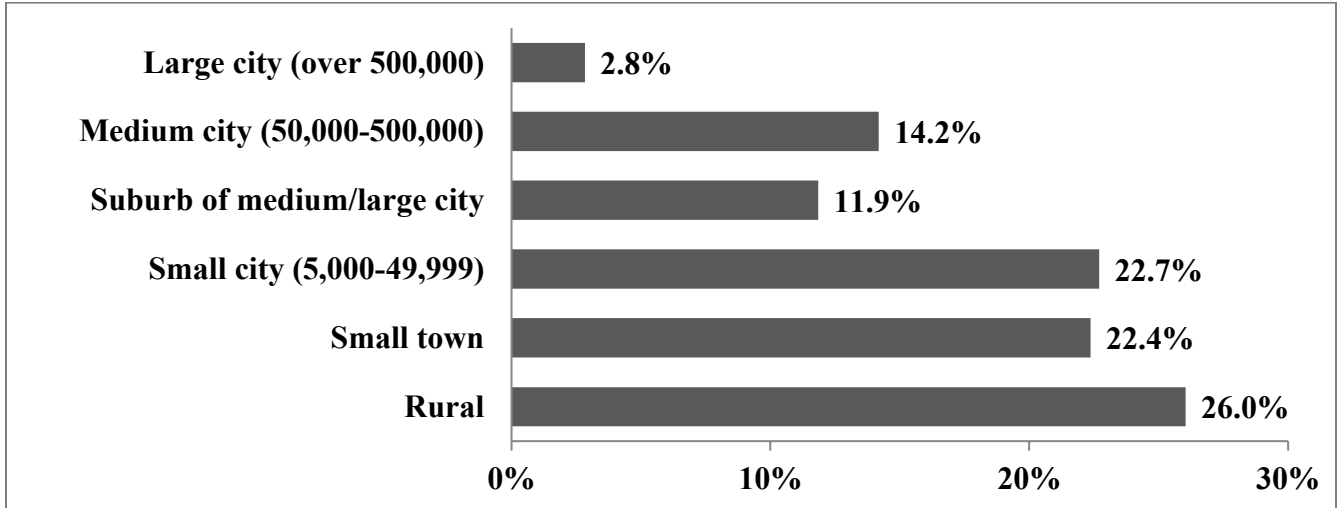


Figure 2. Type of area in which respondents lived ( $n = 599$ ).

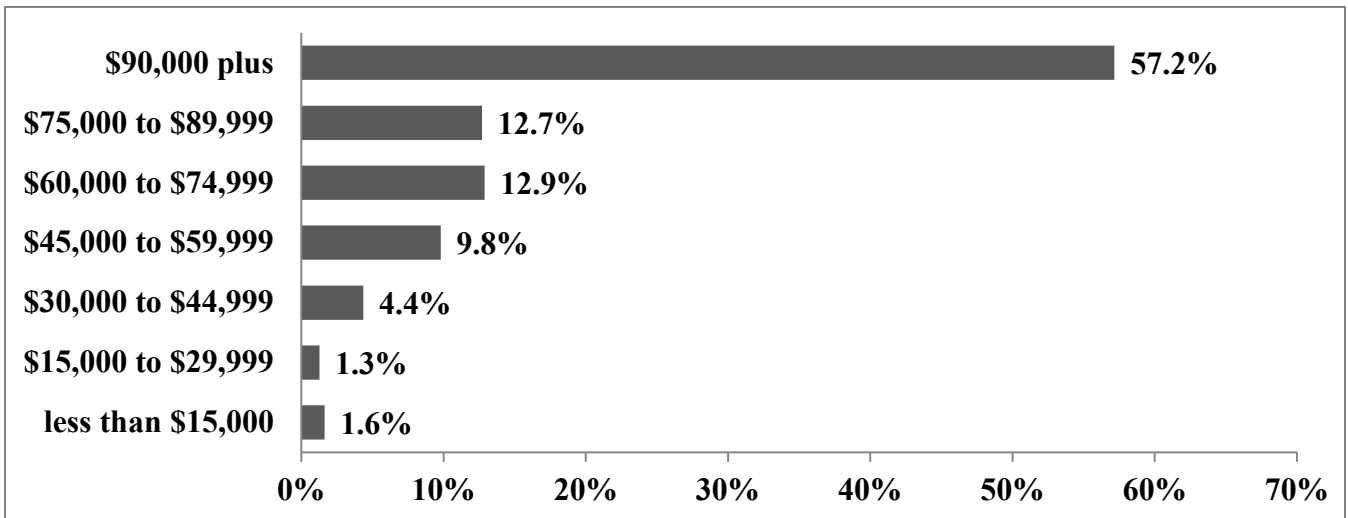


Figure 3. Approximate total (gross) household income ( $n = 551$ ).

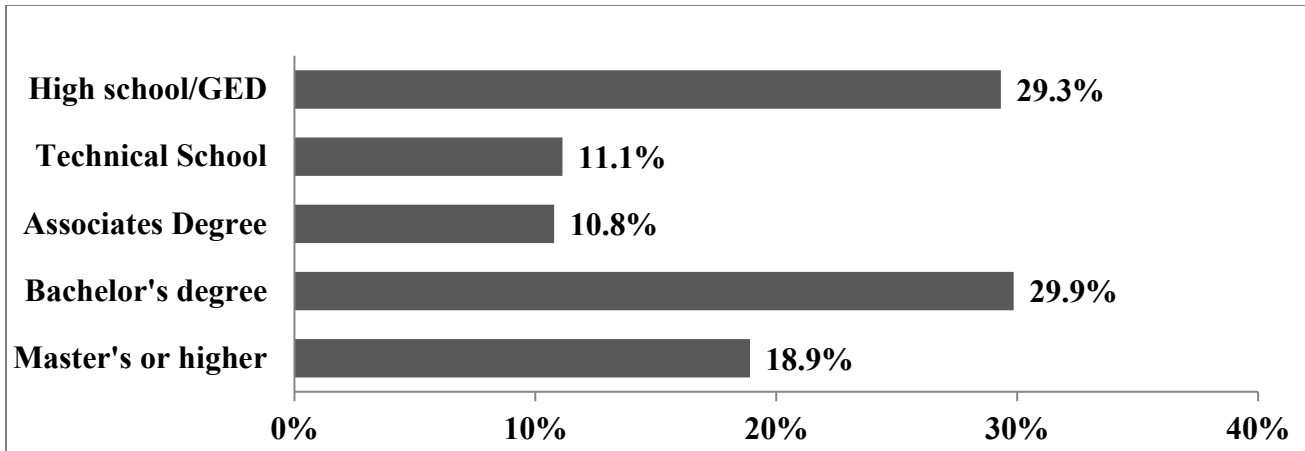


Figure 4. Type of area in which respondents lived ( $n = 599$ ).

The majority (85.8%) of participants completed the questionnaire as an IRAP adult participant, and the other 14.2% responded as a youth IRAP participant (Figure 5). The most popular outdoor recreational activities among respondents were hunting (97.7%) and fishing (77.1%), followed by camping (52.1%), boating (50.9%) hiking (48.1%), and birding (10.2%) (Figure 6). Hunting was rated as the most important activity; 97.4% of respondents ranked it as either moderately or very important (Table 1).

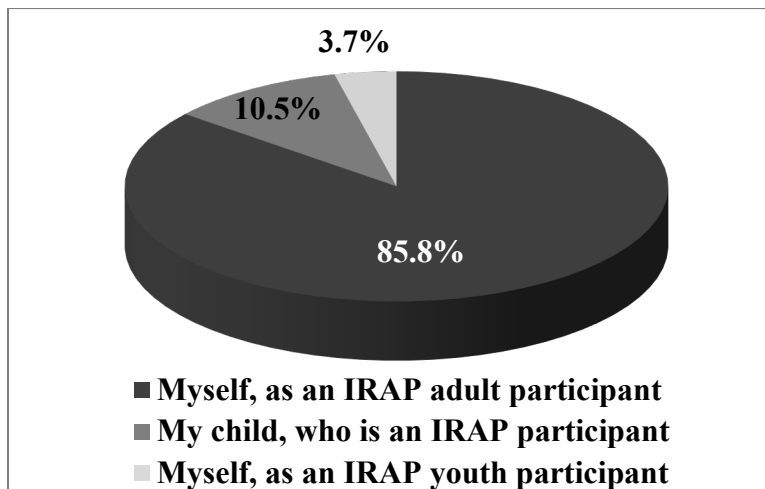


Figure 5. Person who completed survey ( $n = 599$ ).

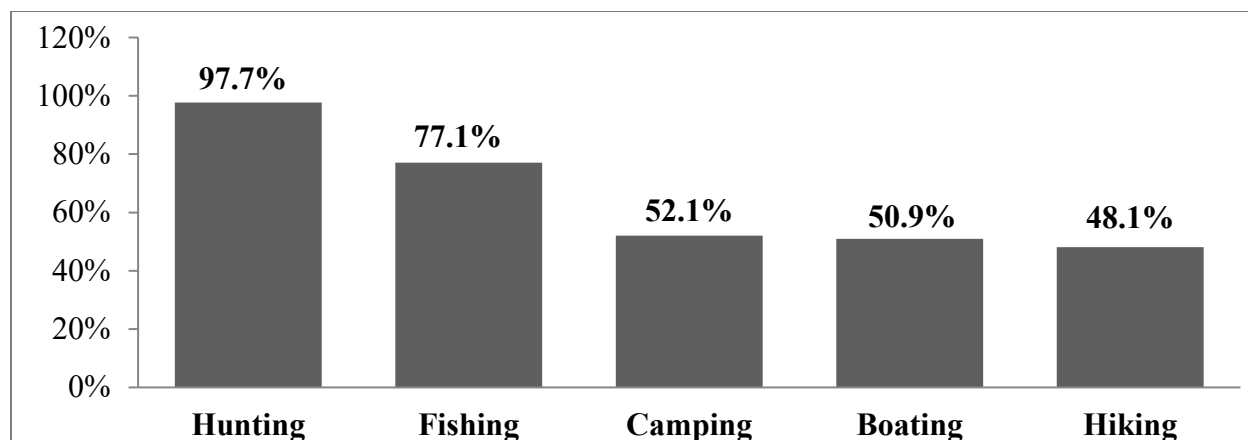


Figure 6. Outdoor recreational activities participated in ( $n = 599$ ).

Table 1. Level of importance for recreational activities.

	Not at all important (%)	Slightly important (%)	Moderately important (%)	Very important (%)	I do not participate (%)
Hunting ( $n = 599$ )	1.2	0.3	4.2	93.2	1.2
Hiking ( $n = 586$ )	7.7	25.4	24.9	22.2	19.8
Birding ( $n = 578$ )	18.3	18	9	7.8	46.9
Fishing ( $n = 597$ )	1.8	6.4	20.1	65.2	6.5
Camping ( $n = 586$ )	5.6	14.8	29.9	33.6	16
Boating ( $n = 583$ )	7.4	15.1	26.9	32.8	17.8

The type of land most often used for recreation was public lands (46.4%), followed by private property not owned by the respondent (29.2%) (Figure 7). A majority (91.5%) of respondents agreed that it was difficult to gain access to private properties, landowners have become less willing to grant permission to recreate on their private land (86.9%), and it was difficult to find places to hunt or recreate in Illinois (76.1%) (Table 2). Almost seventy percent (69.0%) of respondents disagreed with the statement “It is easy to establish and maintain private

landowner contacts in Illinois”. Ninety percent of participants agreed that some type of hunter or recreation program was needed to improve access to private land in Illinois (Table 2).

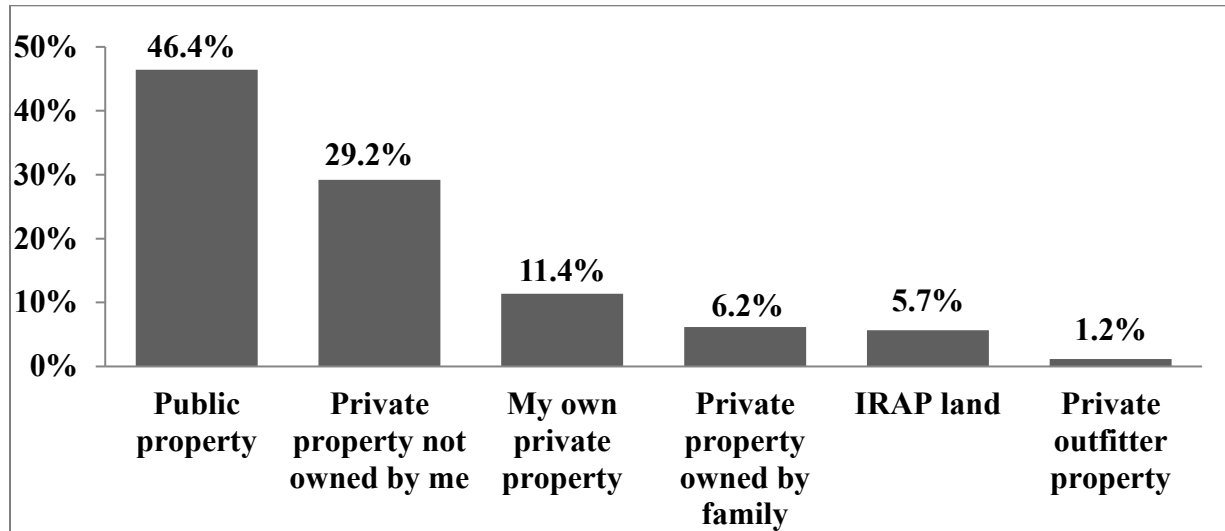


Figure 7. The type of land used most often for hunting or recreation purposes ( $n = 599$ ).

Table 2. IRAP participants’ level of agreement with statements regarding land access ( $n = 598$ ).

	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neither (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Mean <sup>a</sup> (S.D.)
It is difficult to find places to hunt/recreate in Illinois	0.8	13.0	10.0	38.3	37.8	3.99 (1.04)
It is difficult to gain access to private properties for recreating in Illinois	0.3	2.3	5.9	32.3	59.2	4.48 (0.74)
Landowners have become less willing to grant permission to recreate on private land	0.2	1.2	11.7	31.8	55.1	4.41 (0.75)
It is easy to establish and maintain private landowner contacts in Illinois	27.9	41.1	19.4	7.0	4.5	2.19 (1.06)
Some type of hunter/recreation program is needed to improve access to private land in Illinois	0.8	0.7	8.4	34.0	56.1	4.44 (0.75)

<sup>a</sup>1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree

## **IRAP Participation**

More than half (57.2%) of respondents became aware of IRAP by the IDNR website (Figure 8). Other common ways participants became aware were by an IRAP participant (19.9%) or social media (11.7%). Since 2016, IRAP participants have consistently spent the most days afield participating in Sport Fishing followed by archery hunting (Table 3). Additionally, respondents applied to participate in sport fishing the most times a mean 3.13 times ( $n=43$ ) and were drawn to participate in it a mean 2.67 times ( $n=43$ ).

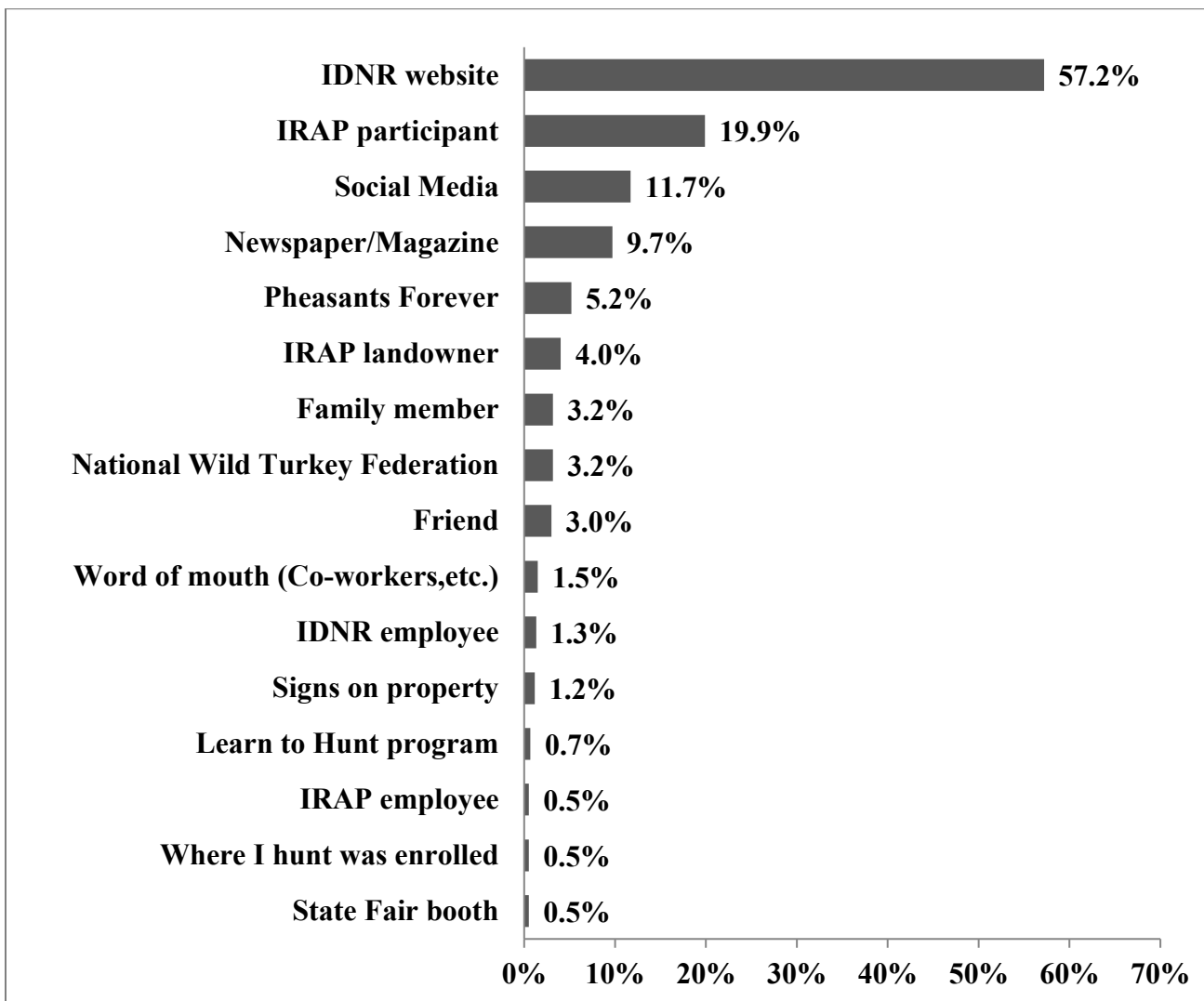


Figure 8. How respondents learned about IRAP ( $n = 599$ ).  
(Percentages >100 because respondents selected all that applied.)

Table 3. IRAP activity participation, by year ( $n = 599$ ).

IRAP activity	<i>n</i>	Mean # of years		Mean # of days spent hunting IRAP by season and year.				
		Applied	Received	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
				Mean (S.D.)	Mean (S.D.)	Mean (S.D.)	Mean (S.D.)	Mean (S.D.)
Spring Youth Turkey Hunting	97	2.37	2.08	2.50 (1.25)	2.57 (1.14)	2.24 (1.05)	2.55 (1.13)	2.55 (1.14)
Rabbit Hunting	10	2.38	1.70	2.00 (0.0)	1.50 (0.71)	1.40 (0.55)	3.75 (2.75)	1.6 (0.89)
Archery Deer Hunting	212	2.08	1.73	5.74 (4.92)	5.65 (4.26)	5.82 (4.27)	5.29 (4.27)	5.9 (4.27)
Spring Season 3 & 4 Turkey	147	2.11	1.81	3.16 (2.22)	2.72 (1.43)	2.87 (1.49)	3.23 (1.55)	3.02 (1.72)
Youth Shotgun Deer Hunting	30	1.74	1.63	2.67 (1.37)	3.00 (1.87)	2.67 (1.03)	2.73 (.65)	2.81 (1.17)
Squirrel Hunting	14	2.83	2.50	2.67 (2.08)	1.83 (1.60)	2.00 (1.31)	4.00 (3.67)	3.56 (3.32)
Upland Game Hunting	49	1.87	1.63	1.50 (0.58)	1.33 (0.50)	1.47 (0.52)	1.71 (0.96)	1.48 (0.57)
Waterfowl Hunting	68	1.67	1.50	1.93 (1.22)	2.08 (1.24)	2.00 (1.17)	1.63 (1.00)	2.00 (1.61)
Sport Fishing	43	3.13	2.67	7.68 (7.75)	6.27 (6.79)	6.61 (6.79)	6.14 (6.81)	6.73 (7.81)
Non-motorized Boat Access	2	3.00	3.00	1 (0)	1 (0)	1 (0)	1 (0)	1 (0)

Many respondents participated in IRAP so they could hunt new places in Illinois (87.4%) and to find private access for outdoor activities in IL (85.9%); whereas 13.2% of respondents participated to try hunting for the first time (Table 4). Seventy-two percent of respondents preferred to access private land over public land for outdoor recreation, however, more than half (60.1%) reported that they were unsuccessful in their attempts to gain private land access.

Table 4. Agreement with statements regarding applying to IRAP and land access.

	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neither (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Mean <sup>a</sup> (S.D.)
I prefer to access private land over public land for outdoor recreation in IL.	2.2	4.2	25.9	35.1	32.6	3.92(0.97)
I do not have time to meet with private landowners to obtain access to private land.	7.5	27.6	29.8	24.1	10.9	3.03(1.12)
I have been unsuccessful in my attempts to gain private land access in IL.	2.9	11.6	25.5	35.9	24.2	3.67(1.05)
I applied to participate in IRAP because I wanted to try hunting for the first time.	42.9	25.0	19.0	7.7	5.5	2.08(1.19)
I applied to participate in IRAP to find private access for outdoor activities in IL.	2.2	3.2	8.7	41.2	44.7	4.23(0.9)
Public land for hunting/recreation in IL is too crowded.	0.5	4.7	22.1	41.0	31.7	3.99(0.88)
I applied to participate in IRAP to fish new places in IL.	28.0	21.1	35.2	8.1	7.6	2.46(1.19)
I applied to participate in IRAP to hunt new places in IL.	2.7	2.0	7.9	41.7	45.7	4.26(0.89)
I applied because I was denied a permit at a state ran site.	31.7	29.8	23.1	10.3	5.1	2.27(1.16)

<sup>a</sup>1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree



Over one third (41.3%) of IRAP participants have applied to access IRAP properties and were not selected, most (65.8%) reapplied (Figures 9 & 10). Thirty-four percent of respondents traveled 26-50 miles on average to participate in IRAP activities, whereas 27.2% traveled less than 26 miles, and 38.5% traveled more than 50 miles (Figure 11).

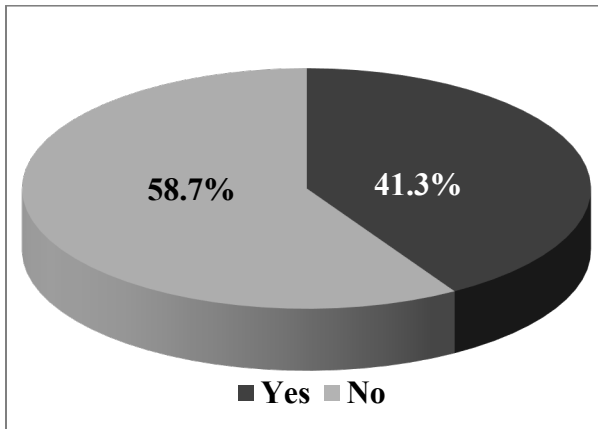


Figure 9. Percentage of respondents who have applied to IRAP properties and have not been selected ( $n = 596$ ).

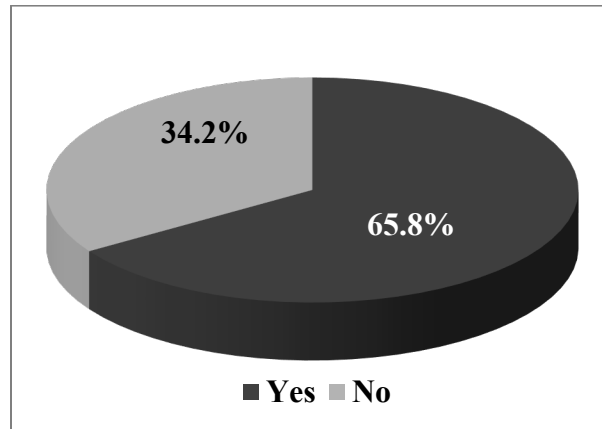


Figure 10. Percentage of respondents who reapplied to access IRAP properties after not being selected ( $n = 243$ ).

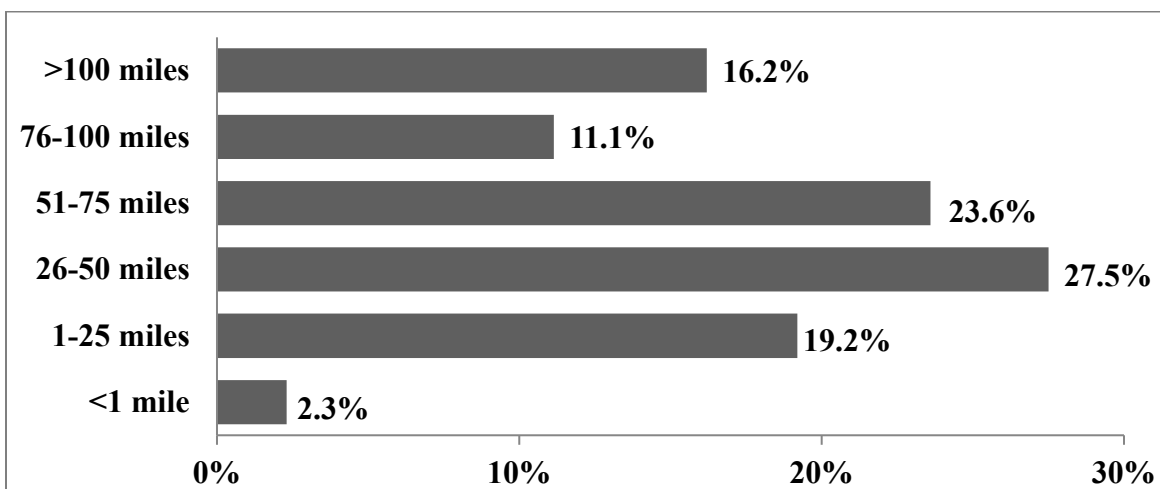


Figure 11. Average traveling distance to participate in IRAP activities ( $n = 530$ ).

Before receiving the questionnaire participants were most likely to be aware that IRAP offered archery deer hunting & turkey hunting (Figure 12). Fewer hunters were aware of small game hunting opportunities such as rabbit and squirrel. Small game hunters (rabbit and squirrel) were also the most reliant upon IRAP (Figure 13) when reliance was restricted to those who were aware IRAP offered the corresponding activity.

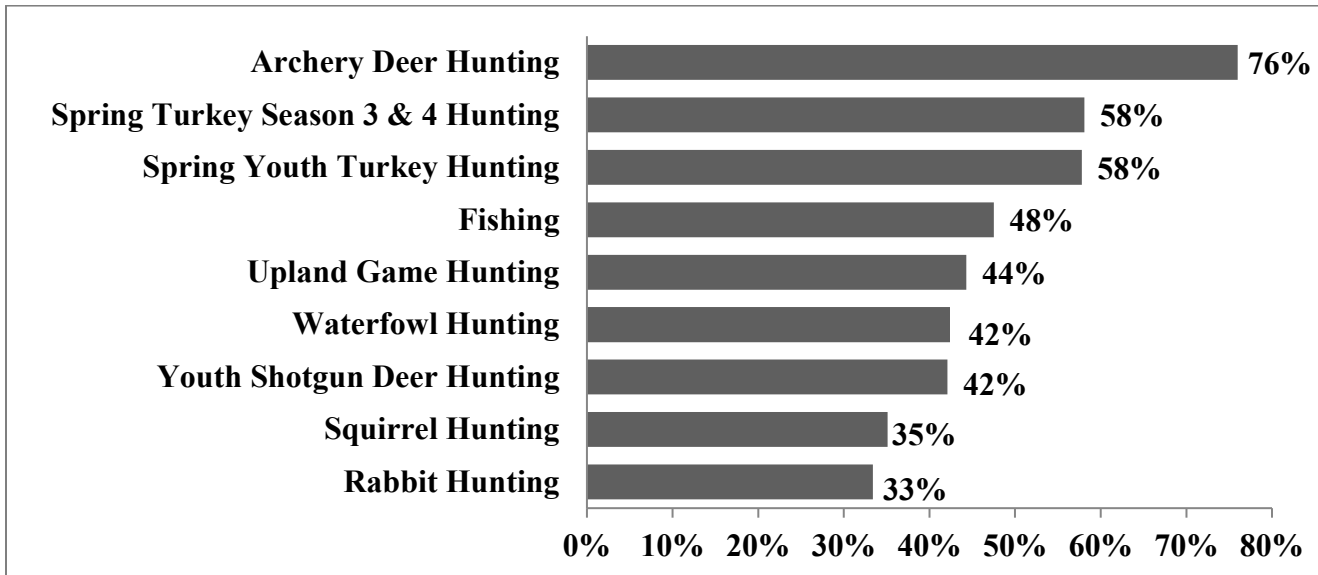


Figure 12. IRAP activities participants knew about before receiving questionnaire ( $n = 587$ ).

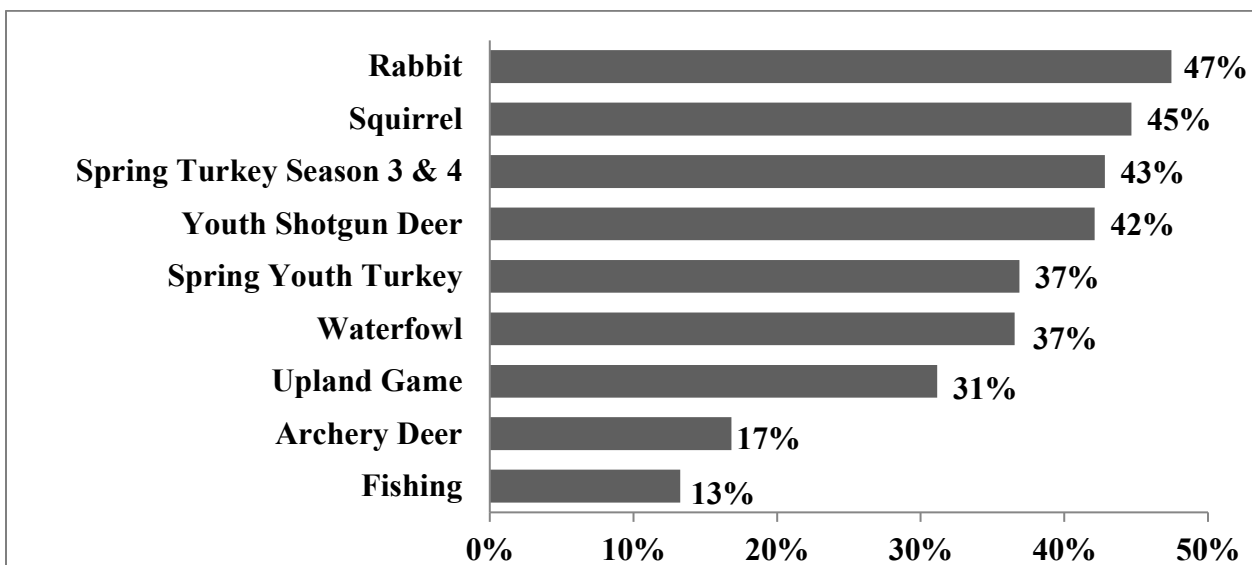


Figure 13. Activities in which respondents<sup>a</sup> would not participate without IRAP.

<sup>a</sup> Restricted to those hunters who were aware the activity was available through IRAP prior to questionnaire.

Participants rated a series of statements relating to their IRAP experience on a 5-point scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree.) The majority of respondents (59.4%) strongly agreed that IRAP is beneficial for Illinois and 55.7% strongly agreed that IRAP was needed to improve hunter/recreation access to private lands (Table 5). Eighty-six percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that IRAP was beneficial to them personally.

Table 5. Level of agreement with statements regarding IRAP.

IRAP:	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neither (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Mean <sup>a</sup> (S.D.)
is needed to improve hunter access to private lands in IL.	0.2	0.5	7.0	36.6	55.7	4.47(0.66)
is needed to improve recreation access to private lands in IL.	0.2	1.7	15.3	36.9	46.0	4.27(0.79)
is beneficial for IL.	0.2	0.2	7.7	32.6	59.4	4.51(0.66)
is beneficial to me personally.	1.2	2.0	10.1	31.7	55.0	4.37(0.84)
gives me the opportunity to spend quality time with family and friends	1.7	4.7	27.3	29.2	37.1	3.95(0.99)
causes more hunters/recreationists to lease places for themselves.	8.1	23.3	49.9	11.5	7.3	2.87(0.97)
decreases the number of hunters that are leaving the sport.	6.2	10.9	36.1	33.1	13.6	3.37(1.05)
creates new opportunities to hunt/recreate on private lands in IL.	0.2	1.0	4.7	43.2	50.9	4.44(0.65)
has no impact on retaining hunters/recreationists in IL.	16.3	32.6	41.3	7.9	1.8	2.46(0.92)
has no impact on recruiting hunters/recreationists in IL.	16.3	34.3	40.2	7.1	2.2	2.45(0.92)
gives me a stronger connection with nature	1.2	3.2	26.9	38.6	30.1	3.93(0.90)
is beneficial to wildlife	0.3	2.0	19.0	43.4	35.3	4.11(0.80)
improves the quality of native vegetation	0.3	2.4	43.6	28.8	24.9	3.76(0.87)
causes hunters lose access to sites.	22.7	39.0	32.3	3.4	2.7	2.24(0.93)

<sup>a</sup>1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree

## **IRAP Experience and Satisfaction**

Two thirds (67.6%) of participants were satisfied with overall with IRAP whereas, 11.6% were dissatisfied (Figure 14). Participants applied to hunt in the greatest number to spring turkey and archery deer seasons (Table 6). When asked about their satisfaction with the application process, 84.2% of spring turkey hunters and 79.4% of archery deer hunters were satisfied or extremely satisfied with process. Waterfowl hunters were the least satisfied with the application process and those who didn't receive a permit were significantly more likely to be dissatisfied [ $F(1, 45) = 5.249, p = .027$ ]; the effect size was moderate ( $\eta = .0326$ ).

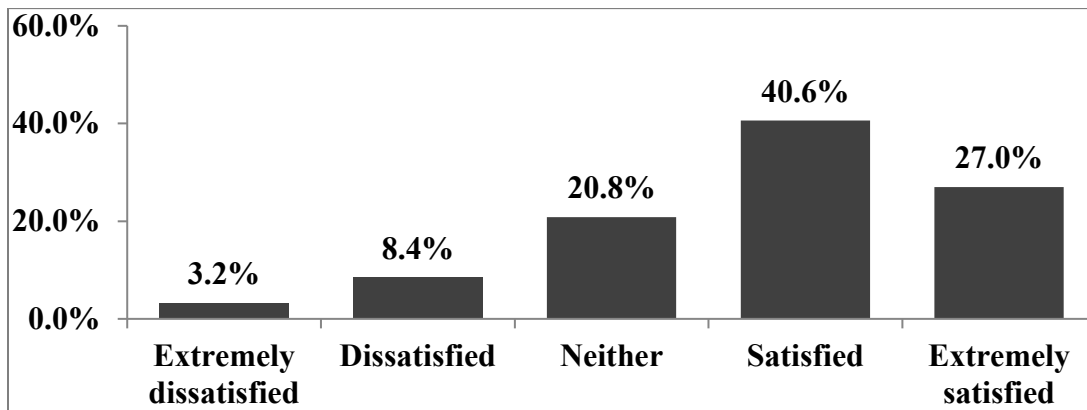


Figure 14. Overall satisfaction with IRAP ( $n = 596$ ).

Table 6. Participant satisfaction with the 2020 application process.

<b>IRAP Permit</b>	<b># who Applied</b>	<b>Received (%)</b>	<b>Extremely Dissatisfied (%)</b>	<b>Dissatisfied (%)</b>	<b>Neither (%)</b>	<b>Satisfied (%)</b>	<b>Extremely Satisfied (%)</b>	<b>Mean<sup>a</sup> (S.D.)</b>
Spring Turkey Hunting	176	92.0	1.7	4.5	9.6	53.1	31.1	4.07(0.86)
Archery Deer Hunting	172	83.7	2.3	8.0	10.3	47.4	32.0	3.99(0.98)
Youth Shotgun Deer	20	95.0	0.0	9.1	18.2	31.8	40.9	4.05(1.00)
Squirrel Hunting	11	81.8	0.0	0.0	23.1	38.5	38.5	4.15(0.80)
Fishing	27	88.9	0.0	6.9	17.2	34.5	41.4	4.10(0.94)
Rabbit Hunting	8	62.5	0.0	10.0	40.0	30.0	20.0	3.60(0.97)
Upland Game Hunting	40	82.5	4.9	14.6	19.5	41.5	19.5	3.56(1.12)
Waterfowl Hunting	46	82.6	10.6	23.4	21.3	36.2	8.5	3.09(1.18)

When asked how satisfied they were with aspects of IRAP, 73.2% of participants were satisfied with the application process for IRAP activities (Table 7). Fifty percent of respondents were dissatisfied with the availability of IRAP properties in their area, but were satisfied with the quality of private lands selected for IRAP sites (54.4%) and the quality of wildlife habitat on the properties (57.8%).

Table 7. Satisfaction level for respondents' experience with IRAP.

	Extremely Dissatisfied (%)	Dissatisfied (%)	Neither (%)	Satisfied (%)	Extremely Satisfied (%)	Mean <sup>a</sup> (S.D.)
Application process for IRAP activities	1.0	8.4	17.3	56.4	16.8	3.80 (0.85)
Lottery selection process for IRAP activities	2.0	7.3	27.8	48.9	14.0	3.66 (0.88)
Number of IRAP activities for Youth Hunters	0.3	4.3	45.2	36.2	13.9	3.59 (0.79)
Number of IRAP activities for military vet hunters	1.5	3.6	54.8	25.9	14.1	3.47 (0.84)
Number of IRAP activities for first time adult Hunters	0.5	2.7	46.8	34.2	15.7	3.62 (0.80)
Availability of IRAP properties in your area	16.7	34.2	22.9	22.3	3.9	2.62 (1.12)
Timing of activities for IRAP properties	3.0	11.8	35.7	39.8	9.6	3.41 (0.93)
Quality of wildlife habitat on IRAP properties	2.9	8.1	31.2	44.0	13.8	3.58 (0.93)
Quality of private lands selected for IRAP sites	3.2	8.9	33.4	39.6	14.8	3.54 (0.96)
Abundance of wildlife on IRAP properties	5.2	10.6	40.2	34.6	9.3	3.32 (0.97)

<sup>a</sup>1=Extremely Dissatisfied, 5=Extremely Satisfied

### **Hunting on IRAP Sites**

Ninety-seven percent of respondents considered themselves a hunter (Figure 15).

Respondents hunted an average of 2.20 IRAP sites in Illinois ( $n=479$ ). Most hunters (71.2%) saw the species they were hunting while they were on an IRAP site (Figure 16). Roughly forty-four percent of hunters were satisfied with the number of shooting opportunities they had hunting IRAP, 23.1% were dissatisfied, and 33.1% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (Figure 17). One-third of participants reported harvesting game while hunting on IRAP property (Figure 18).

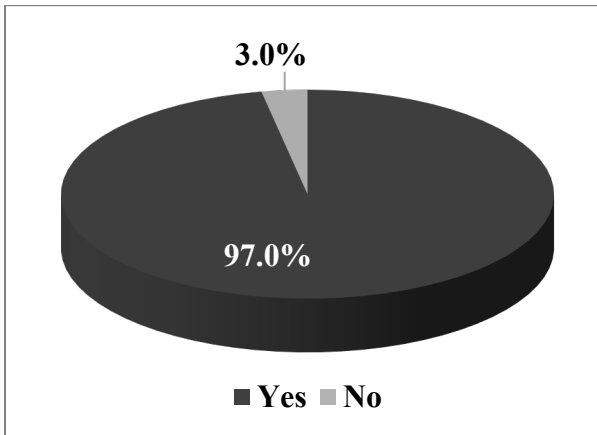


Figure 15. Percentage of respondents who considered themselves a hunter ( $n = 479$ ).

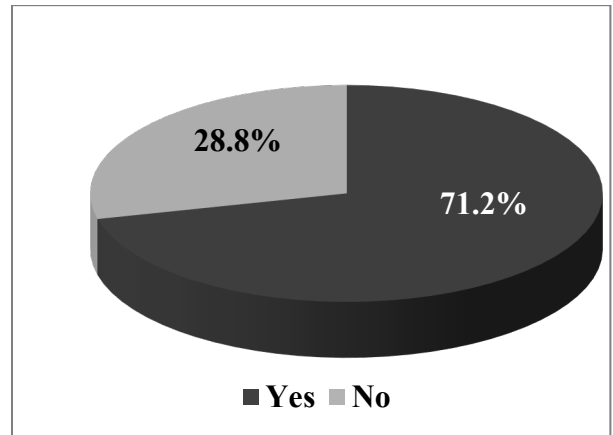


Figure 16. Percentage of respondents who saw the species they were hunting ( $n = 476$ ).

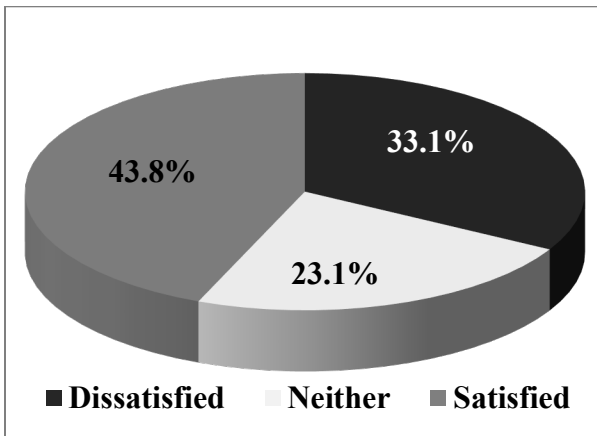


Figure 17. Satisfaction with the number of shooting opportunities while on IRAP sites ( $n = 476$ ).

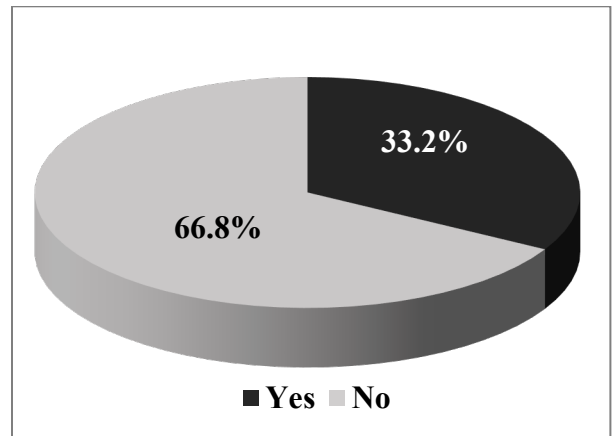


Figure 18. Percentage of respondents who harvested game while hunting IRAP ( $n = 476$ ).

Over three-quarters (77.3%) of respondents had ever participated in an IRAP youth turkey hunt (Figure 19), and 53.4% of those would also apply for statewide turkey permits during seasons 3 and 4 if IRAP were not an option (Figure 20). Fifty-two percent among those who had not hunted in turkey youth IRAP were not at all interested in the IRAP youth turkey season occurring later to avoid bad

weather and/or Easter weekend (Figure 21). Whereas, 31.5% of those who hunted in IRAP Youth Turkey were somewhat interested.

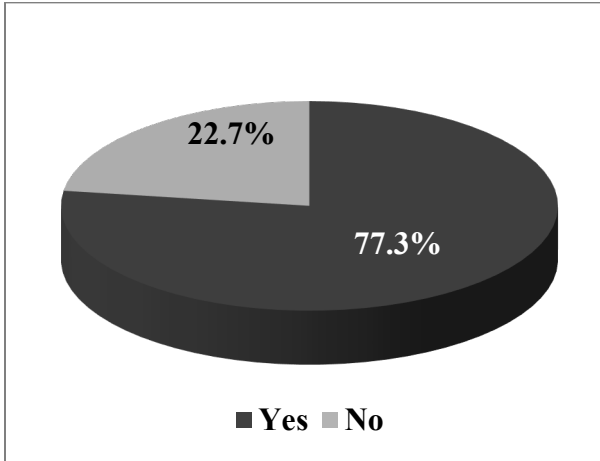


Figure 19. Percentage of respondents who have ever participated in IRAP youth turkey hunting ( $n = 475$ ).

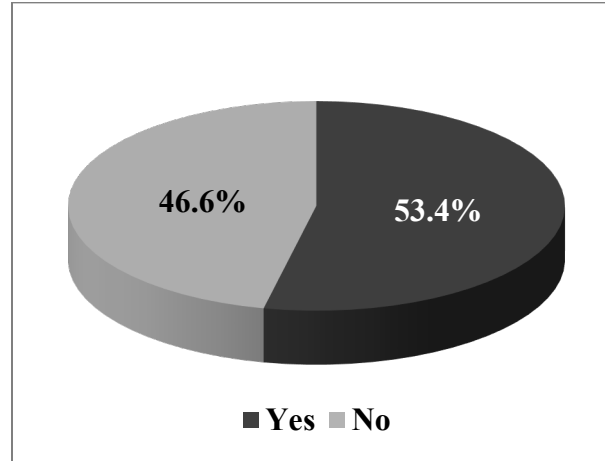


Figure 20. Among IRAP youth turkey hunters, percentage who would still apply for state wide turkey hunting during seasons 3 and 4 if IRAP were not available ( $n = 476$ ).

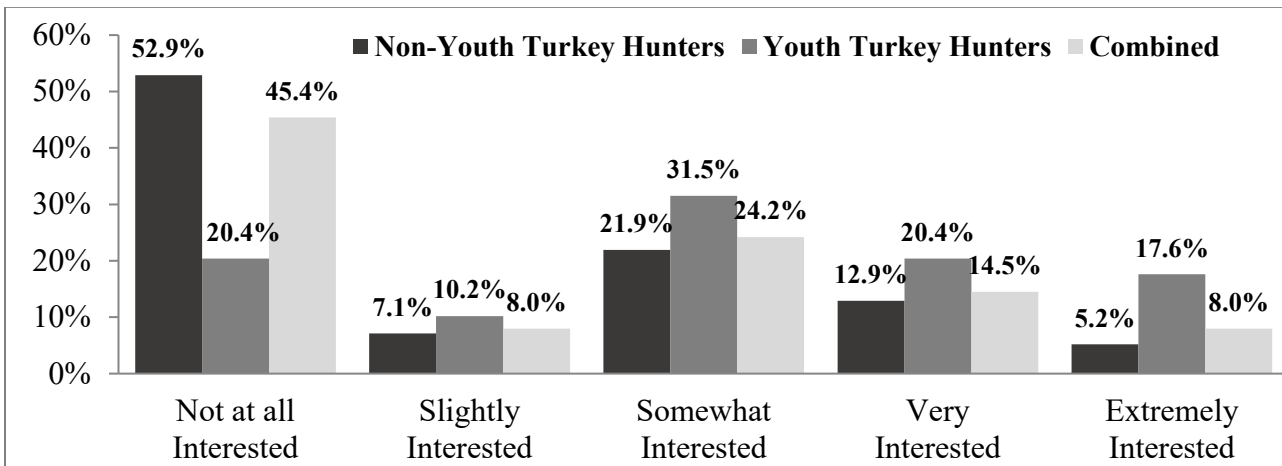


Figure 21. Interest in having IRAP youth turkey season occurring later to avoid bad weather and/or Easter weekend ( $n = 476$ ).

Almost all (95.0%) of respondents would still hunt in Illinois if IRAP were not available, however, approximately 33.2% would hunt less than they currently participate (Figures 22 & 23). If



IRAP were not available, respondents would most likely hunt on public property (81.1%), private property owned by friends (37.8%), or private property not owned by themselves, family, or friends (27.3%) (Figure 24).

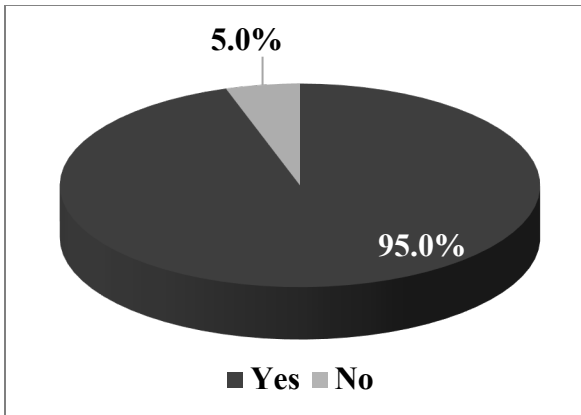


Figure 22. Percentage of respondents who would still hunt in Illinois if IRAP was not available ( $n = 479$ ).

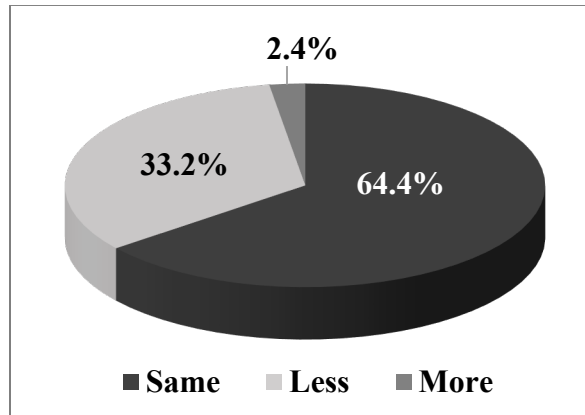


Figure 23. How often respondents would hunt if IRAP were not available ( $n = 458$ ).

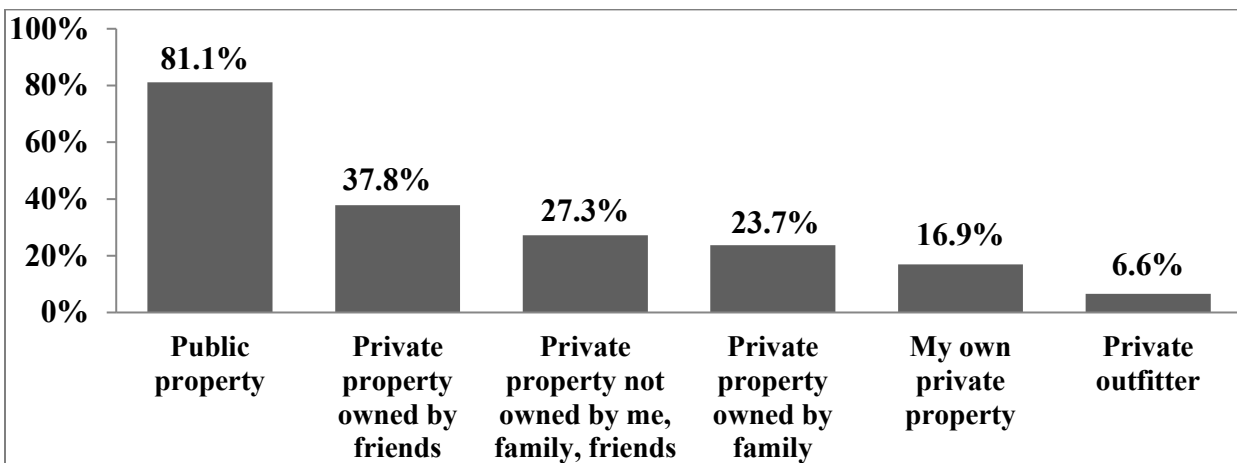


Figure 24. Type of land IRAP hunters would hunt if IRAP were not available ( $n = 455$ ). (Percentages >100 because respondents selected all that applied.)

Fifty-two percent of respondents reported that they were either likely or extremely likely to seek permission to hunt private property that was not enrolled in IRAP (Table 8). Eighty-two percent of hunters were likely to participate in additional IRAP activities, a majority (87.6%) of respondents would

recommend IRAP to a friend, and 87.8% were likely to participate in IRAP in the future. Among those that were not likely to hunt in IRAP again, proximity of sites to home (62.2%), lack of harvest (35.1%), and not enough wildlife (21.6%) were the main reasons (Table 9).

Table 8. Likelihood to perform the following actions regarding IRAP.

	Extremely Unlikely (%)	Unlikely (%)	Neither (%)	Likely (%)	Extremely Likely (%)	Mean <sup>a</sup> (S.D.)
Seek permission to hunt private property not enrolled in IRAP	7.3	25.4	14.7	39.4	13.2	3.26 (1.18)
Participate in additional IRAP activities	1.5	5.3	11.4	55.6	26.3	4.00 (0.85)
Recommend IRAP to a friend	2.1	2.1	8.2	46.1	41.5	4.23 (0.85)
Participate in IRAP in the future	2.1	4.4	5.7	37.7	50.1	4.29 (0.92)

<sup>a</sup>1=Extremely Unlikely, 5=Extremely Likely

Table 9. Reasons for not likely hunting IRAP in the future ( $n = 37$ ).

	Number of unlikely participants	Percent of unlikely participants
Not enough IRAP properties close to home	23	62.2%
Lack of harvest success	13	35.1%
Not enough wildlife	8	21.6%
Health problems	6	16.2%
Unable to be drawn for IRAP	5	13.5%
Regulations are too complicated	4	10.8%
Poor site for hunting*	4	10.8%
Lack of free time	3	8.1%
Not enough IRAP activities	2	5.4%
Lack of interest	2	5.4%
Too many regulations	2	5.4%
Lack of hunting partners	1	2.7%
More places to hunt	1	2.7%
Too expensive	1	2.7%
Moved*	1	2.7%
Release of liability form*	1	2.7%

\*Write-in responses provided by participants

(Percentages add up to >100 because respondents selected all that applied.)

One quarter of hunters were interested in participating as a mentor in a mentor program, 39.3% would be interested in IDNR offering a mentored program for new/beginning hunters, and 40.6% would encourage a friend to enroll as new hunters in a program. Whereas, 51% were not at all interested in enrolling as a new hunter and 21% were interested (Table 10).

Table 10. Interest level in the following actions regarding IRAP.

	Not at all Interested (%)	Slightly interested (%)	Somewhat Interested (%)	Interested (%)	Extremely Interested (%)	Mean <sup>a</sup> (S.D.)
IDNR offering a mentored hunting program for youth.	26.5	12.3	26.1	23.1	11.9	2.82 (1.3)
IDNR offering a mentored hunting program for new/beginning hunters.	23.4	13.4	24.0	25.7	13.6	2.93 (1.4)
Enroll in a mentor program as a new hunter.	51.0	12.5	15.5	13.5	7.5	2.14 (1.4)
Participating in a mentor program as a mentor	32.5	14.0	28.7	14.6	10.2	2.98 (1.3)
Encouraging friends to enroll as new hunters in a mentor program	21.1	14.7	23.6	26.6	14.0	2.84 (1.3)

<sup>a</sup>1=Extremely Uninterested, 5=Extremely Interest

Hunters were asked to rate the importance and satisfaction with several aspects of hunting on IRAP properties (Table 11). Hunters placed the lowest importance on “having a mentor to guide you”, 69.4% of hunters ranked it as not at all important ( $\bar{x} = 1.65$ ). Having a mentor to guide you had a mean satisfaction of 2.52 and 57.2% moderately satisfied or greater. Seeing game species had the highest mean importance ( $\bar{x} = 4.27$ ) and 84% ranked it as very or extremely important. Seeing game species had a lower mean satisfaction ( $\bar{x} = 3.72$ ) and 64% of participants were very or extremely satisfied. Similarly, “having IRAP property close to your home”, “an easy application process”, and “IRAP sites having high quality habitat” all had higher mean importance

Table 11. Importance and Satisfaction with of aspects of IRAP and hunting

		Not all %	Slightly %	Moderately %	Very %	Extremely %	Mean (S.D.)
Having a mentor to guide you	Importance	69.4	10.8	9.7	5.9	4.2	1.65 (1.13)
	Satisfaction	28.1	14.8	40.9	9.6	6.7	2.52 (1.19)
Successfully harvesting game on IRAP property	Importance	7.8	10.1	33.1	28.4	20.6	3.44 (1.15)
	Satisfaction	14.3	6.8	34.4	26.4	18.1	3.27 (1.25)
Confidence in your ability to successfully harvest game	Importance	8.3	5.9	20.8	40.3	24.8	3.67 (1.15)
	Satisfaction	2.4	2.7	24.4	39	31.5	3.94 (0.94)
Confidence in your level of skill to safely hunt	Importance	10.2	3.4	11.7	33.9	40.9	3.92 (1.25)
	Satisfaction	2.2	1.1	15.6	36.9	44.2	4.20 (0.90)
Having enough free time to hunt	Importance	6.3	5.5	20.9	38.7	28.5	3.78 (1.11)
	Satisfaction	4.4	5.8	31.4	35.6	22.8	3.67 (1.03)
Having enough partners to hunt with	Importance	26.4	17.5	26.8	18.4	10.8	2.7 (1.33)
	Satisfaction	16.1	16.8	35.6	22.1	9.4	2.92 (1.19)
Having IRAP property close to your home	Importance	3.4	7.6	18.6	31.0	39.5	3.96 (1.09)
	Satisfaction	10.5	12.5	24.7	30.0	22.3	3.41 (1.25)
Crowding on IRAP properties	Importance	7.4	7.2	20.8	33.5	31.0	3.73 (1.19)
	Satisfaction	5.3	8.8	32.1	31.2	22.6	3.57 (1.09)
IRAP sites having high quality habitat	Importance	1.3	1.9	12.4	41.1	43.2	4.23 (0.83)
	Satisfaction	3.1	4.9	20.3	42.8	28.9	3.90 (0.98)
An easy application process to IRAP	Importance	2.1	2.7	18.2	35.5	41.4	4.11 (0.94)
	Satisfaction	2.9	7.3	27.1	35.7	27.1	3.77 (1.02)
Seeing game species on IRAP property	Importance	0.6	1.9	13.5	37.8	46.2	4.27 (0.81)
	Satisfaction	7.7	7	21.1	33.9	30.2	3.72 (1.19)

<sup>a</sup>1=Not at All Important/Satisfied, 5=Extremely Important/Satisfied

## Hunting in Illinois

IRAP participants had been hunting a mean 25.7 years, and 22.8 years in Illinois. Friends (64.4%), alone (57.8%), and children (38.3%) were the most common people with whom participants hunted (Figure 25). The majority purchased a hunting license every year (89.1%), 5.5% did so most years, 2.5% did so occasional years, and 2.8% purchased one rarely or never. Ninety-two percent purchased a hunting license for 2020-21 and of those 97.5% hunted. Hunters, when not restricted to only IRAP lands, targeted deer (84.8%), turkey (55.9%), and ducks (31.9%) in 2020-21 (Figure 26). In 2020-21 sixty percent hunted on both public and private lands, 23.7% hunted exclusively on private land, and 16.3% only on public land. Among those who hunted both public and private land, 45.1% hunted public more often and 54.9% private.

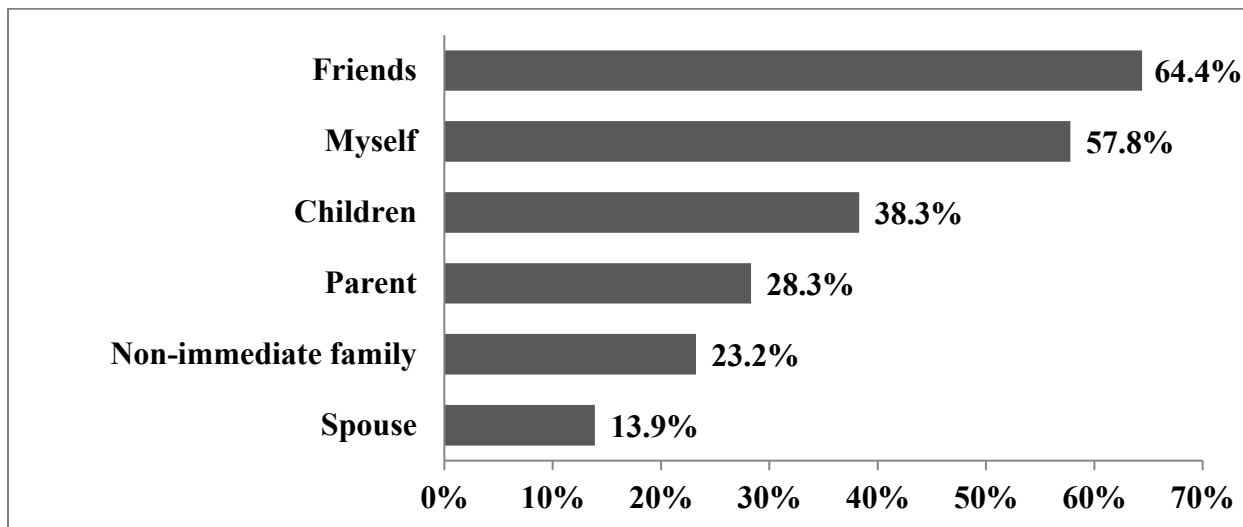


Figure 25. People with whom respondents reported hunting ( $n = 590$ ).

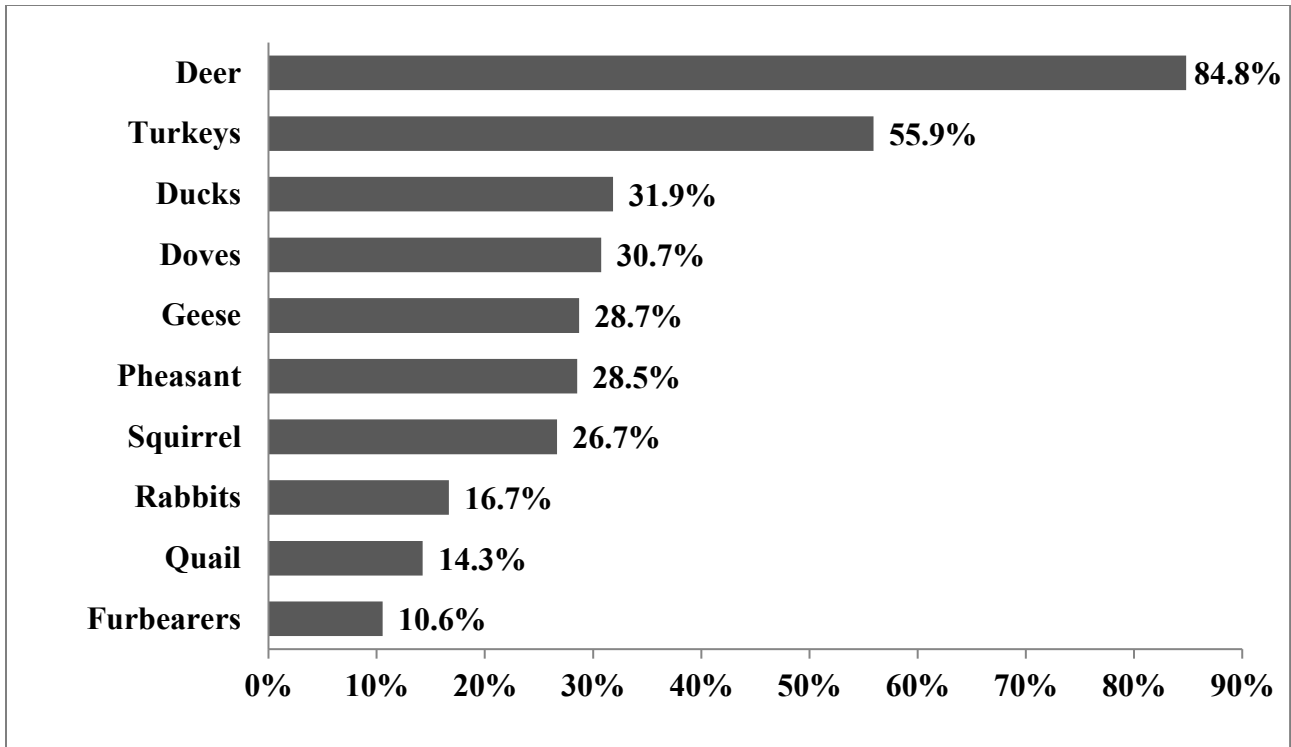


Figure 26. Species hunters targeted in 2020-21 (Hunting was not restricted to IRAP land,  $n = 590$ ).

Over half (59.5%) of IRAP participants had applied for a permit through Illinois DNR’s lottery application system in 2020-21 (Figure 27). The most popular permits applied for were firearm deer (61.7%) and spring turkey (56.1%; Figure 28). Among those who applied 87.2% successfully drew a permit. Approximately one quarter (26.8%) of hunters hunted at least one day in another state. When asked for the primary reason for hunting outside of Illinois, targeting a species not found in Illinois (25%), to hunt with family/friends (21%), and access to private land (15%) were the top responses (Table 12). Most write in responses focused on management of public lands and a lack of quality and quantity game species.

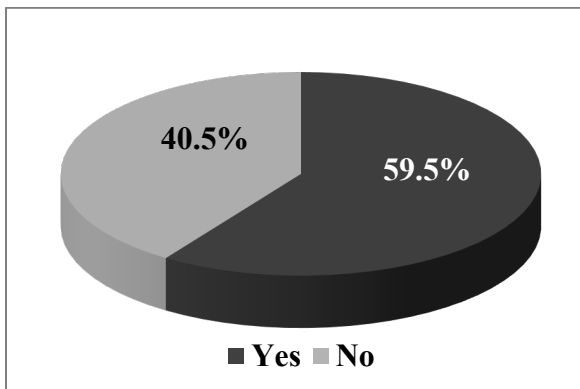


Figure 27. Percentage of respondents who applied for an IDNR hunting lottery permit ( $n = 598$ ).

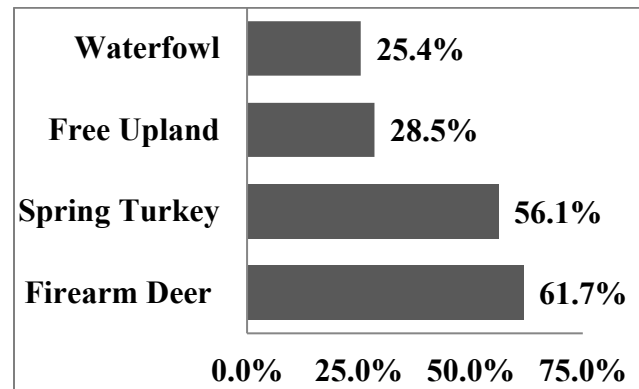


Figure 28. IDNR lottery permits hunters applied for ( $n = 359$ ).

Table 12. Primary reason for hunting in another state ( $n = 164$ ).

	Frequency	% of hunters
Species not found in Illinois	41	25
To hunt with family/friends	35	21
I have private land access in another state	25	15
Lack of public land in Illinois	18	11
To try something new	12	7
Greater quality and quantity of game (and habitat) outside of Illinois*	10	6
Unsuccessful drawing a permit in Illinois	4	2
To get more hunting opportunities*	3	2
Moved*	3	2
Poor public land management in Illinois (Waterfowl)*	2	1
Private outfitter*	2	1
Hunting trip/vacation*	2	1
Proximity*	2	1
Shutdown of public lands due to COVID-19*	1	1
To introduce a new hunter into bowhunting*	1	1
Early and later season*	1	1
Adventure/test skills*	1	1
Easier regulations*	1	1

\*Write-in responses provided by participants

(Percentages add up to >100 because respondents selected all that applied.)



Almost half (45.2%) of participants belong to a hunting organization such as Ducks Unlimited or Pheasants Forever. One third of participants (35.9%) knew a female family member or friend who has expressed interest in hunting but is uncomfortable trying it on their own. Whereas, 48.1% knew of a family member or friend who would be interested in attending an IDNR sponsored mentoring program for youth or beginning hunters. If hunters had only one day to hunt, most (55.4%) would choose to hunt deer, 14.7% would hunt turkey, and 10.5% would hunt ducks (Table 13). Ninety-eight percent of participants agreed that hunting was a critical tool for managing wildlife populations (Table 14). They were less likely to agree with statements about the impacts of recruiting new hunters. Less than half (47.1%) agreed that “recruiting new hunters creates more competition for permits”.

Table 13. If only one day to hunt, species hunters would target ( $n = 599$ ).

	Frequency	% of hunters
Deer	332	55.4
Turkey	88	14.7
Ducks	63	10.5
Pheasants	56	9.3
Quail	17	2.8
Geese	11	1.8
Turkey	8	1.3
Rabbits	5	0.8
Elk*	5	0.8
Fish*	4	0.7
Dove	3	0.5
None	3	0.5
Furbearer	1	0.2
Mushroom*	1	0.2
Ruffed Grouse*	1	0.2
Bear*	1	0.2

\*Write-in responses provided by participants

Table 14. Level of agreement with statements regarding hunting and hunters.

	Strongly Disagree		Neither (%)	Strongly Agree		Mean <sup>a</sup> (S.D.)
	(%)	(%)		(%)	(%)	
Hunters make important financial contributions to wildlife conservation	0.2	0.0	3.4	24.5	72.0	4.68 (0.55)
Recruiting the next generation of hunters is important for the future of hunting	0.0	0.5	3.4	28.8	67.3	4.63 (0.58)
Hunting is a critical tool for managing wildlife populations	0.0	0.2	2.2	28.4	69.2	4.67 (0.53)
Hunting provides a sustainable source of food	0.3	3.0	10.7	32.8	53.1	4.35 (0.82)
Hunters are important advocates for conservation efforts	0.0	0.5	2.7	26.5	70.4	4.67 (0.55)
Recruiting new hunters creates more competition for permits	6.0	15.6	31.2	30.7	16.4	3.36 (1.11)
Recruiting new hunters creates crowding at public hunting sites	6.4	15.7	33.7	31.0	13.2	3.29 (1.08)

<sup>a</sup>1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree

## Discussion

Results of the survey of participants strongly suggests IRAP is providing private land access and opportunities for hunting and other forms of recreation. Though the program is not recruiting many new hunters it is allowing public access to privately areas. IRAP participants recreated predominately on public lands. Though an overwhelming majority, 95%, would hunt even if IRAP were not available, most would seek out public lands to do so. IRAP was rated highly among participants. Overall satisfaction on a 5-point scale was  $\bar{x}$ =3.80, and over 87% of respondents would recommend IRAP to a friend. Though those who were not successful in acquiring a permit were less satisfied with IRAP. Almost 90% of respondents said they were likely to participate in a future IRAP activity.

IRAP participants were in agreement that IRAP is beneficial for Illinois and beneficial to them personally. The program creates new opportunities to hunt and recreate on private land, by opening areas that had been previously reserved to friends and neighbors of the landowners. The program is

drawing those that were previously relying on public lands and is needed to improve recreation access to private lands. Generally, respondents were satisfied with all aspects of the IRAP program, however several were given higher importance than satisfaction. The aspects with the greatest disparities were the availability of IRAP properties in their area and seeing game species on the IRAP property. A lack of IRAP properties available close to home was also the most common reason for unlikely future IRAP participation, but it is important to note that uncertain future participation was cited by a minority of respondents. Although most hunters would still hunt in Illinois if IRAP were not available, one-third indicated they would hunt less than they do now without the program.

Youth turkey hunters were in favor of having IRAP youth turkey season occurring later to avoid bad weather and/or Easter weekend. Over half of hunters were interested in having a mentor program for IRAP hunters in need. Though less than 5% of hunters participated in squirrel and rabbit hunting, almost half of those who did were dependent on IRAP. The best example of the IRAP programs ability to recruit new hunters may lie in the youth turkey, which had fewer participants dependent on IRAP, but had significantly more hunters participating. The popularity of this use of IRAP lands may be useful in recruiting new hunters through a series of mentorship programs. A program that focuses on learning hunting skills through small game hunts could increase IRAP's ability to recruit new hunters. A program that raises awareness of small game hunting on IRAP could be beneficial for retention and re-engagement of small game hunters.

Although respondents typically preferred to access private land over public land for outdoor recreation, public property was the type of land used most often. Many hunters reported that it was difficult to gain access to private properties for recreating and were often unsuccessful in their attempts to gain private land access. Almost all respondents believed that some type of recreation program is needed to improve access to private land in Illinois.

## 2. IRAP Landowner Survey

### Results

We sampled 187 IRAP landowners for this study, and 12 individuals were removed as addresses undeliverable. This left a usable sample of 175 individuals, and we received 128 usable questionnaires for a 73% response rate.

#### Landowner Profile

Respondents were mostly male (85.9%) (Figure 29) and had an average age of 61.5 ( $\pm$  12.3,  $n=128$ ) years old. One third of landowners (34.4%) were living on the property enrolled in IRAP and were often the sole-decision maker on the private property or shared decision making with their spouse (Figures 30 & 31). Two thirds (66.1%) of landowners had a bachelor's degree or higher (Figure 32). IRAP properties were in 45 counties in Illinois; according to respondents, the most common counties containing IRAP properties were Macoupin, Fulton, Green, Montgomery, McAdams ( $n= 128$ ). The majority (72.0%) of respondents' private land made up only 0-10% of their total net household income (Figure 33).

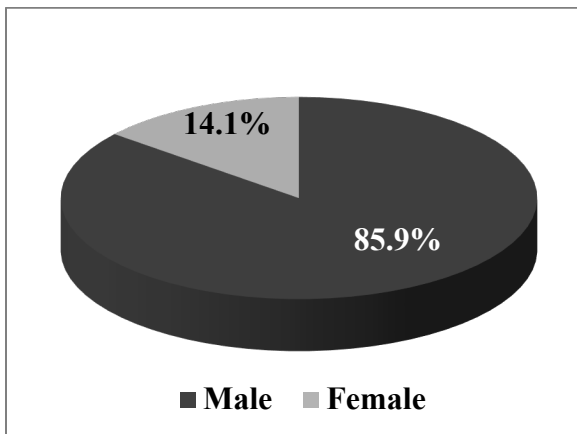


Figure 29. Gender distribution of landowners ( $n = 128$ ).

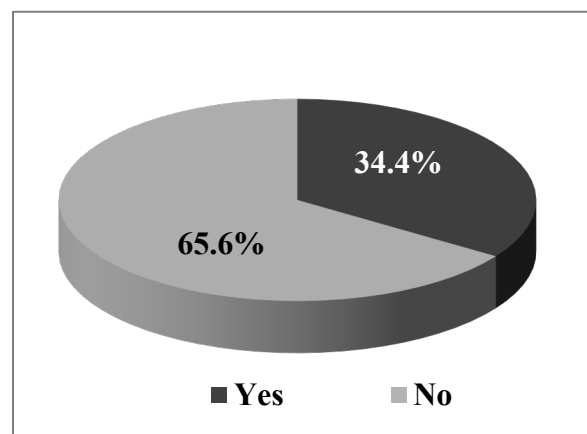


Figure 30. Percentage of respondents who lived on the property enrolled in IRAP ( $n = 128$ ).

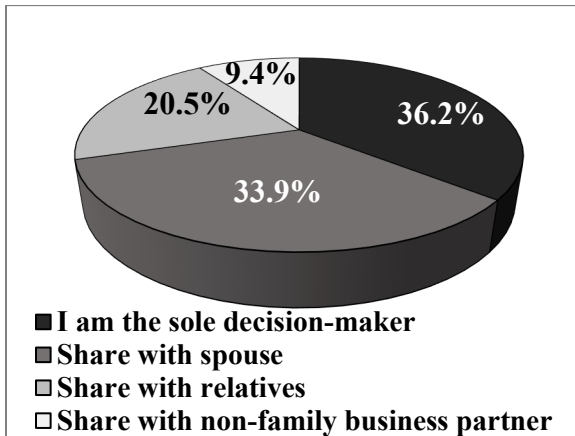


Figure 31. Primary decision-makers on IRAP properties ( $n = 124$ ).

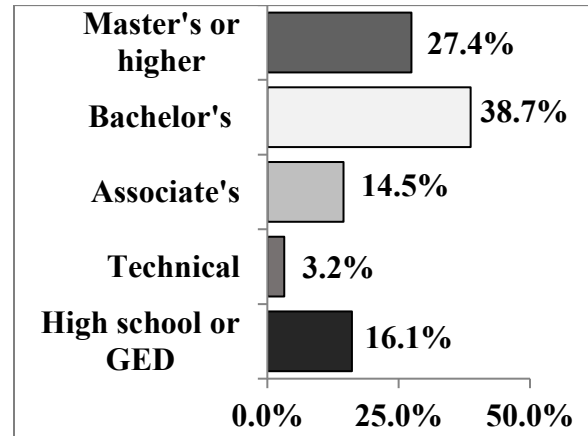


Figure 32. Landowners highest level of education completed ( $n = 118$ ).

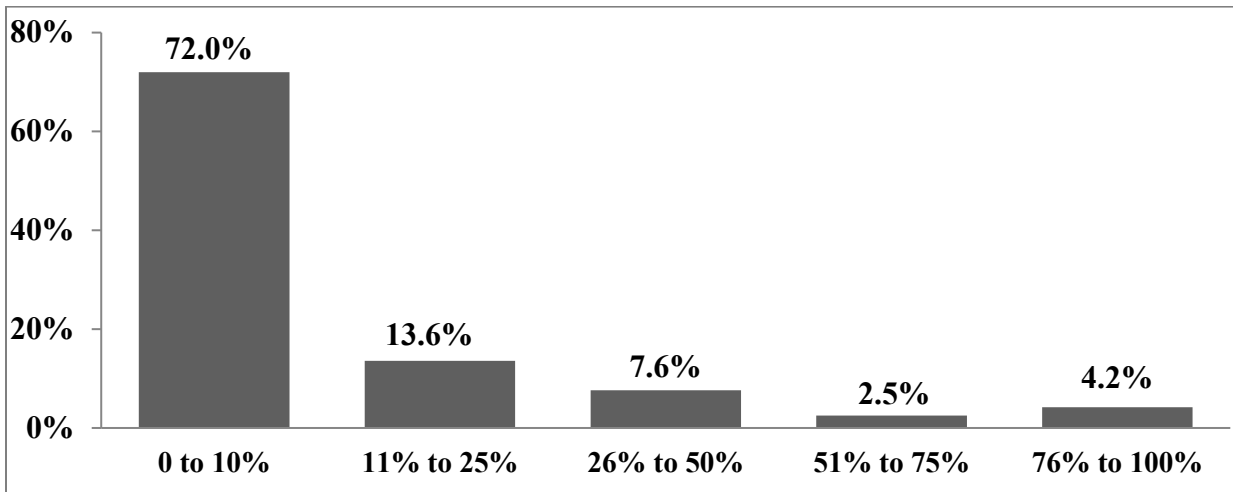


Figure 33. Percentage of total net household income from IRAP properties ( $n = 118$ ).

Ninety-five percent of respondents reported that they were currently enrolled in IRAP (Figure 34). Six respondents reported they were not currently enrolled in IRAP; four of those respondents indicated that they had sold the property previously enrolled in IRAP. Respondents could check more than one reason and the remaining responses had one person each, one was dissatisfied with the program, another wanted to be in control of all activities performed their property, and write in values of “were not wanting another 4 year commitment” and “price and options”.

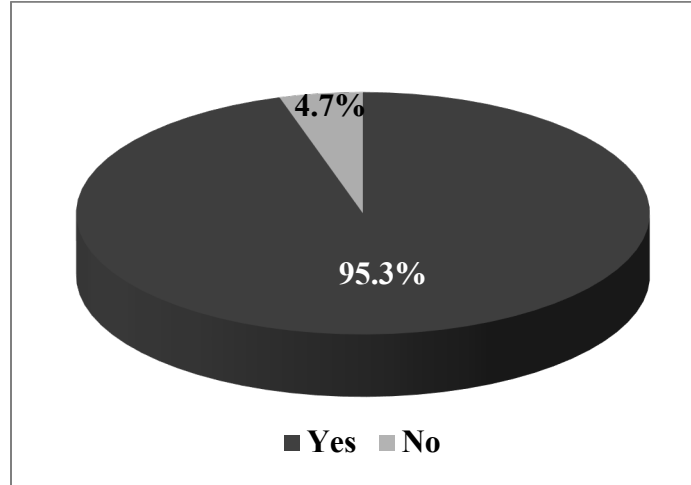


Figure 34. Respondents currently enrolled in IRAP ( $n = 128$ ).

The top three reasons why respondents chose to enroll their land in IRAP were to improve habitat for wildlife, recruit youth & new hunters by providing a place for them to hunt, and to receive financial cost-share assistance for habitat projects, (77%, 75%, and 70%, respectively) (Table 15).

Table 15. Reasons for choosing to enroll properties in IRAP ( $n = 128$ ).

Reason for enrolling	Number of landowners	Percent of landowners
To improve habitat for wildlife.	99	77%
To help recruit youth & new hunters by providing a place for them to hunt.	96	75%
To receive financial cost-share assistance for habitat projects.	90	70%
To receive technical assistance with habitat improvements.	82	64%
To provide hunting/recreation opportunities for others.	81	63%
Financial lease payment incentive provided by Illinois DNR.	75	59%
To have a habitat management plan implemented on my land.	73	57%
To have semi-controlled hunting/recreation activities on my land.	37	29%
To have someone (participants) report trespassers while using my land.	13	10%
Reducing/helping with taxes*	2	2%
Deer control*	2	2%
Our organization is 100% about habitat; 95% of the reason for our enrollment is to help pay for restoration work*	1	1%
Win, win for everyone*	1	1%
To improve upland game with professional help*	1	1%
Primarily for youth*	1	1%
Insurance coverage*	1	1%
Purple paint application*	1	1%
Control invasive species*	1	1%
Show goodwill to Illinois*	1	1%
Help in maintaining CRP ground*	1	1%

\*Write-in responses provided by participants

(Percentages add up to >100 because respondents selected all that applied.)

## Conservation Practices Prior to IRAP Enrollment

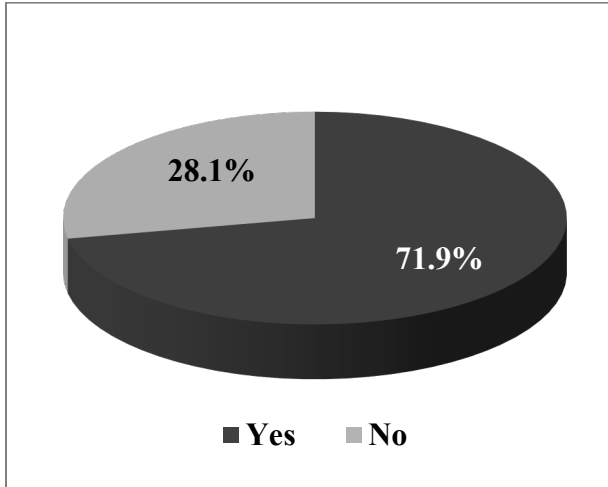


Figure 35. Percentage of respondents who had any habitat improvements on their property prior to enrollment in IRAP ( $n = 128$ ).

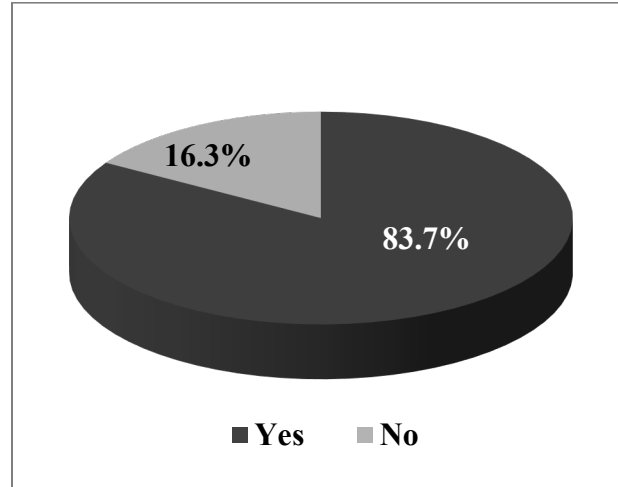


Figure 36. Among those who had habitat improvements percentage whose improvements were due to enrollment in a conservation program ( $n = 92$ ).

Over two-thirds (71.9%) of landowners reported implementing habitat improvement projects on their property prior to their enrollment in IRAP (Figures 35). The majority (83.7%) of those habitat improvements occurred due to enrollment in a conservation program (Figures 36). Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and Conservation Reserve Easement Program (CREP) were the most popular programs in which landowners previously enrolled (Table 16). Ten percent of landowners had previously participated in one of several timber improvement practices but did not provide which organization helped facilitate or require the timber improvements. Over 90% of landowners felt improving the quality of habitat on their land for game species was important or extremely important (Table 17). Whereas, 82.6% of landowners felt improving the quality of habitat on their land for non-game species was important or extremely important. However, when asked about the importance of the amount of habitat, landowners placed similar levels of importance for game species as for non-game species. Mean levels of importance for those who had and those who had not enrolled their land previously in a conservation program were compared and no statistical differences were found.



Table 16. Percent of landowners who had participated in various USDA and Illinois state conservation programs, in order of participation.

Reason for enrolling	Number of landowners	Percent of landowners
Conservation Reserve Program: CRP	63	82%
Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program: CREP	17	22%
Other*	8	10%
Conservation Stewardship Program: CSP	5	6%
Wetland Reserve Program: WRP	4	5%
Environmental Quality Income Program: EQIP	3	4%
Farmable Wetlands Program: FWP	2	3%
State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement: SAFE	2	3%
Forestry Development Act: FDA	1	1%
National Wild Turkey Federation: NWTF	1	1%
Agricultural Conservation Easement Program: ACEP	0	0%
Source Water Protection Program: SWPP	0	0%

\*Write-in responses provided by participants

Table 17. Importance of habitat conservation to IRAP landowners ( $n = 126$ ).

	Extremely Unimportant	Unimportant	Neither	Important	Extremely Important
Protecting native plant species on my land	2.4%	2.4%	8.7%	43.3%	43.3%
Preserving native plant species on my land	2.4%	2.4%	9.4%	44.1%	41.7%
Restoring native habitats on my land	2.4%	1.6%	8.8%	40.8%	46.4%
Improving the quality of habitat on my land for game species	2.3%	1.6%	3.1%	31.3%	61.7%
Improving quality of habitat on my land for non-game species	3.2%	4.0%	10.3%	43.7%	38.9%
Increasing the amount habit on my land for game species	2.4%	2.4%	8.7%	43.3%	43.3%
Increasing the amount of habitat on my land for non-game species	2.4%	2.4%	9.4%	44.1%	41.7%

### **Concerns Before IRAP Enrollment**

Over one half (55.5%) of landowners reported they had concerns about enrolling their land in IRAP; however, 90.1% of these property owners felt that these concerns were adequately addressed (Figures 37 & 38). Behaviors of hunters and other recreationists on their land, personal liability, and the use and possible damage to the property were among the top concerns of respondents (Figure 39). Other concerns landowners reported included not knowing when or who was using the property (2.8%), concerns of hunters using non-enrolled adjacent properties (1.4%), and unfulfilled promises or payments (1.4%). Among the seven respondents who did not feel that IRAP had adequately addressed their concerns, three (42.5%) felt that their concerns related to the habitat work performed had not been addressed (Figure 40). Two participants wrote-in that their concerns about when and who was hunting their property had not been addressed and would prefer access to contact information for hunters.

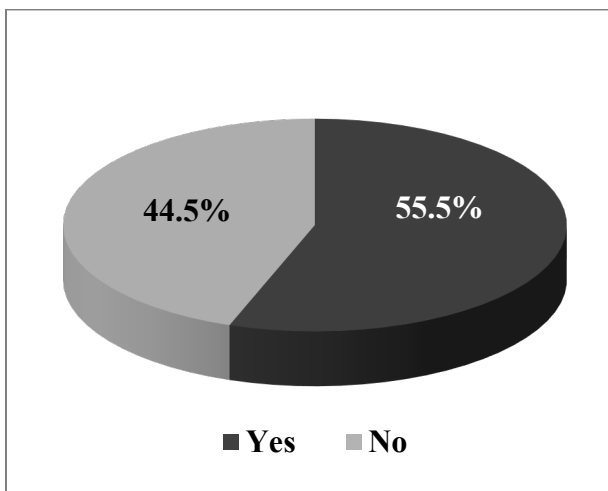


Figure 37. Percentage of respondents who had concerns about enrolling in IRAP ( $n = 128$ ).

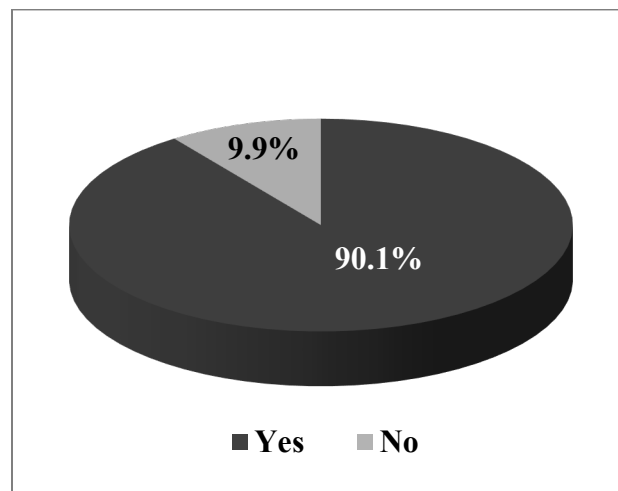


Figure 38. Percentage of respondents who felt their concerns were adequately addressed ( $n = 71$ ).

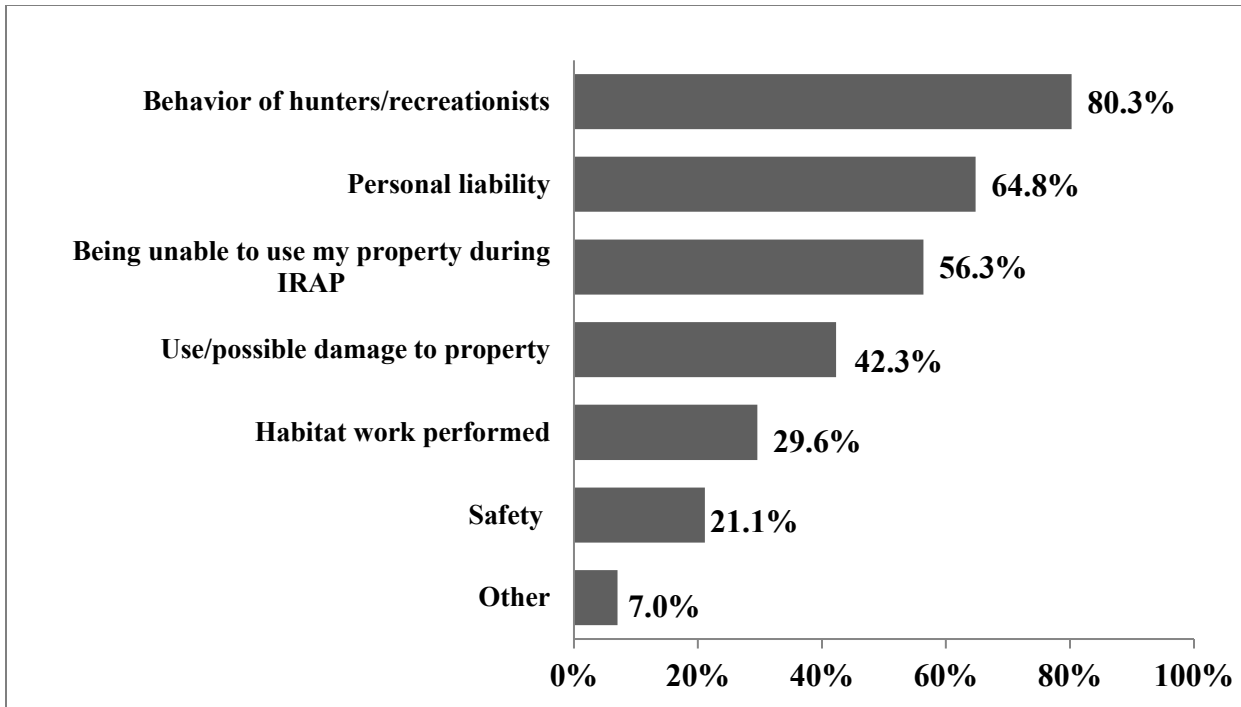


Figure 39. Respondents' concerns about enrolling in IRAP ( $n = 71$ ).  
 (Percentages >100 because respondents selected all that applied.)

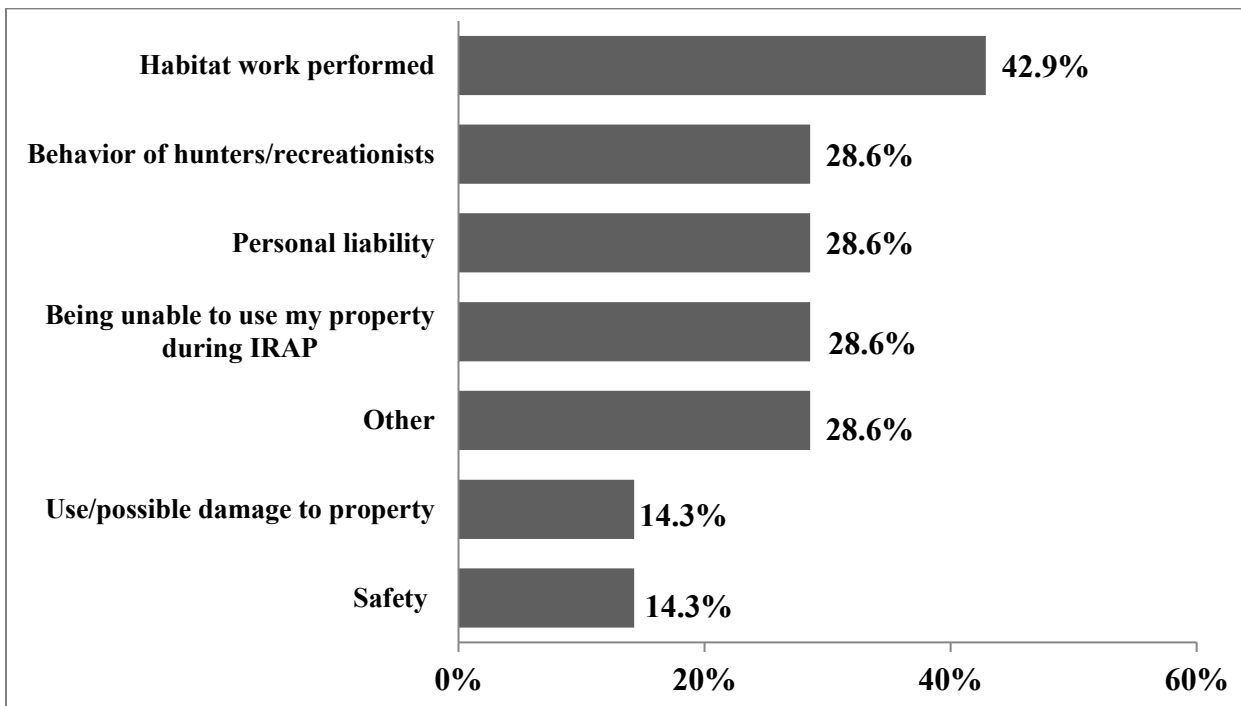


Figure 40. Respondents' concerns that were **not addressed** after IRAP enrollment ( $n = 7$ ).  
 (Percentages >100 because respondents selected all that applied.)

## Hunting Prior to and After IRAP Enrollment

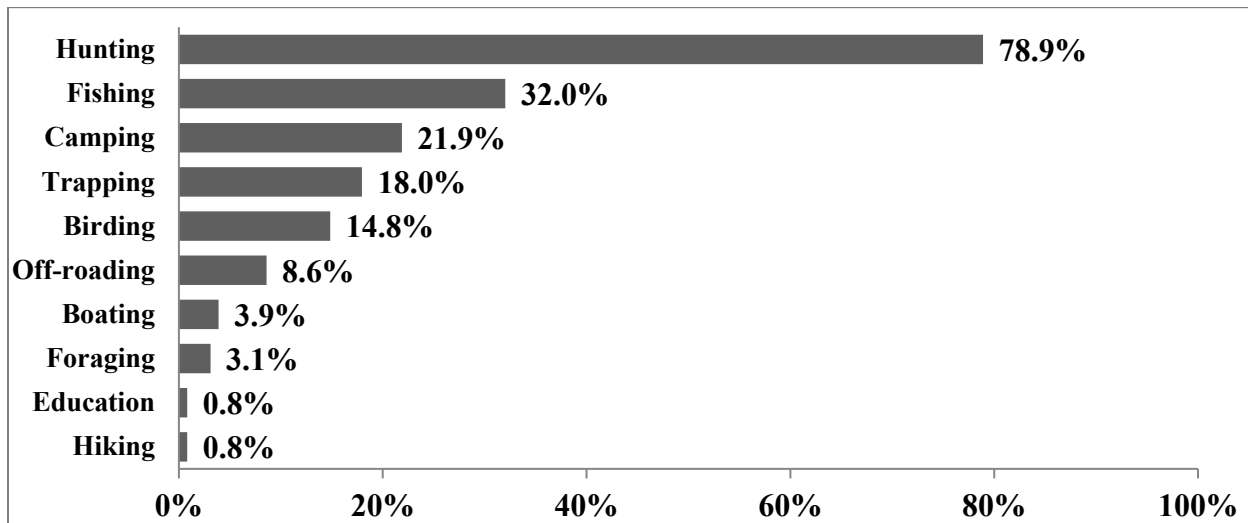


Figure 41. Recreations open to non-family members prior to IRAP enrollment ( $n = 128$ ). (Percentages are greater than 100 because respondents selected all that applied.)

Hunting was the most allowed activity on IRAP properties prior to enrollment (Figure 41). Four of every five (82.0%) of landowners have denied access to hunters asking for permission to hunt on their land (Figure 42). Respondents were asked how often they would deny hunting access on their property, using a 7-point scale. The scale was reduced to a 3-point scale, with landowners denying hunting access on their property rarely, sometimes, or often. More landowners indicated they rarely denied hunting access than those who often denied it; 43.7% rarely denied hunting, 31.0% sometimes denied hunting, and 25.3% often denied hunting. Eighty-three percent of respondents allowed hunters to access their property before enrolling in IRAP (Figure 43). Similar percentages of landowners had denied access among those who allowed hunting prior to IRAP as compared to those who had not, and they did not differ statistically. Most landowners (66.3%) had denied hunters access to their property because they wanted to keep it open to their family and friends (Figure 44) and 53.3% denied access over liability

concerns. Write-in responses were safety concerns because the property was open to hiking, trophy deer management, and owning a hunting club.

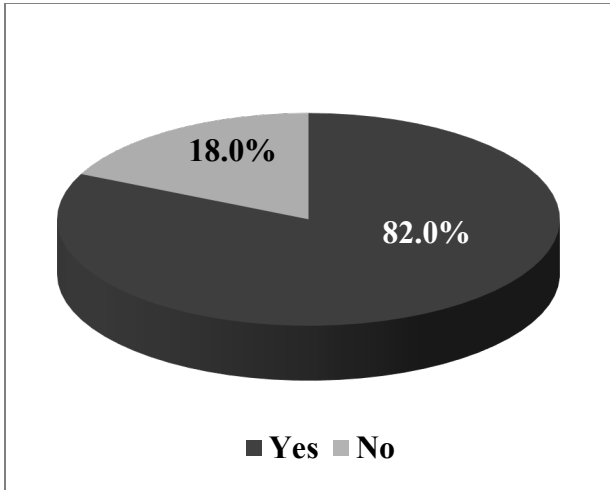


Figure 42. Percentage of respondents who have ever denied access to hunters asking for permission to hunt their property ( $n = 128$ ).

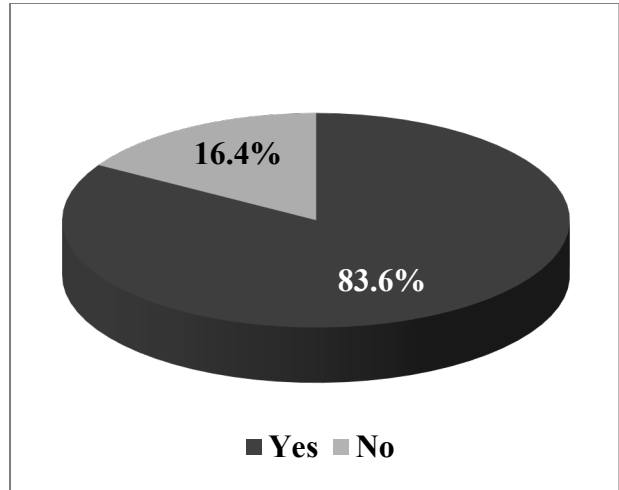


Figure 43. Percentage of respondents who allowed hunters to access their property before enrolling in IRAP ( $n = 126$ ).

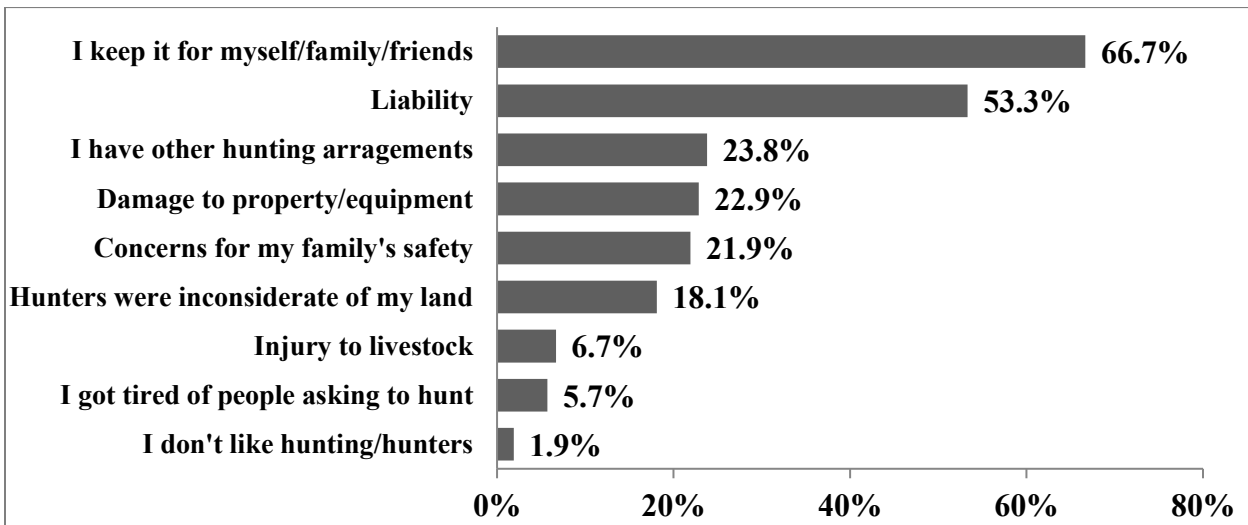


Figure 44. Reasons hunters were denied permission to hunt ( $n = 105$ ). (Percentages are greater than 100 because respondents selected all that applied.)

Prior to enrolling in IRAP landowners allowed an average of 6 hunters on their property each year (Table 18). Landowners reported that they, family, friends, and neighbors were the most common groups allowed to hunt the property and that they allowed an average 4.8 hunters from those groups hunt the property. After enrollment in IRAP these groups were also the primary hunters known to be on the property (Figure 45). Among those landowners who previously hunted their property, 71.3% hunted their property about as often as did prior to enrollment, 20.7% hunted less often, and 8% hunted more often (Figure 46).

Table 18. Number and types of people allowed to hunt property prior to IRAP enrollment.

Persons who hunted	Number of landowners	Percentage of landowners	Total number of hunters allowed	Mean number of hunters allowed
Me and/or immediate family	80	75.5%	214	2.7
Extended family, friends, and neighbors	70	66.0%	259	3.7
Hunters who asked permission	22	20.8%	54	2.5
Hunters who leased the property	20	18.9%	108	5.4
Open to anyone who wanted to hunt	0	0.0%	0	0
Total	106		635	6.0

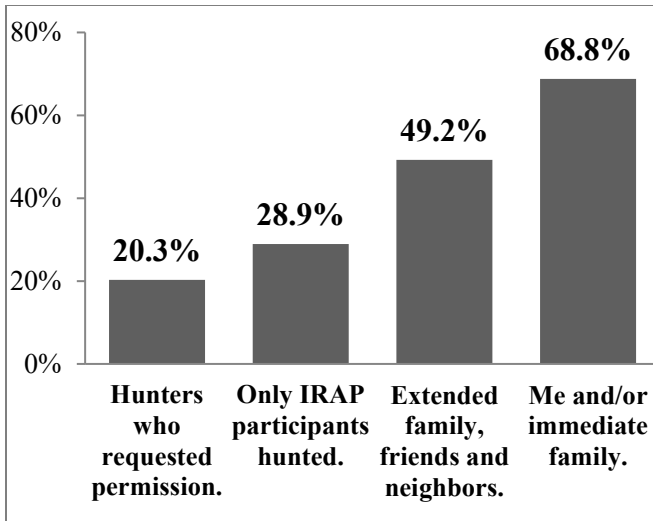


Figure 45. Types of people who hunted on property after IRAP enrollment ( $n = 106$ ). (Percentages are >100 because respondents selected all that applied.)

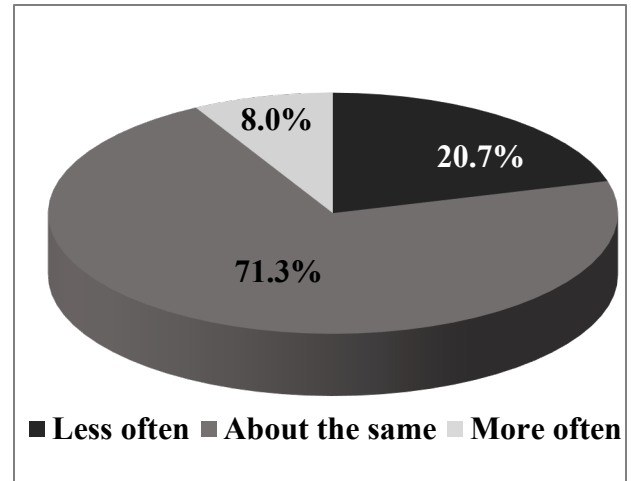


Figure 46. Amount of time hunting own property compared to years before enrollment in IRA ( $n = 87$ ).

Prior to IRAP enrollment deer and turkey were the most common game hunted on landowner property, 92.5% and 70.1% respectively (Figure 47). After enrollment in IRAP Spring youth turkey was the most popularly allowed season for hunting (79.8%) (Figure 48). Less than fifty percent of landowners allowed archery (44.5%) or youth shotgun deer hunting (43.0%).

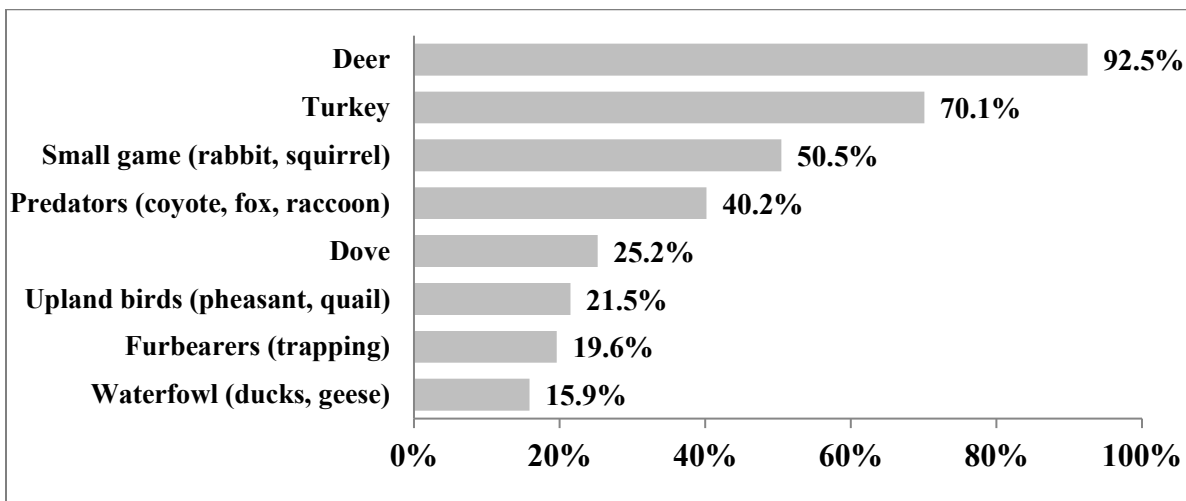


Figure 47. The type of game hunted on respondents' properties before IRAP enrollment (Percentages are greater than 100 because respondents selected all that applied.)

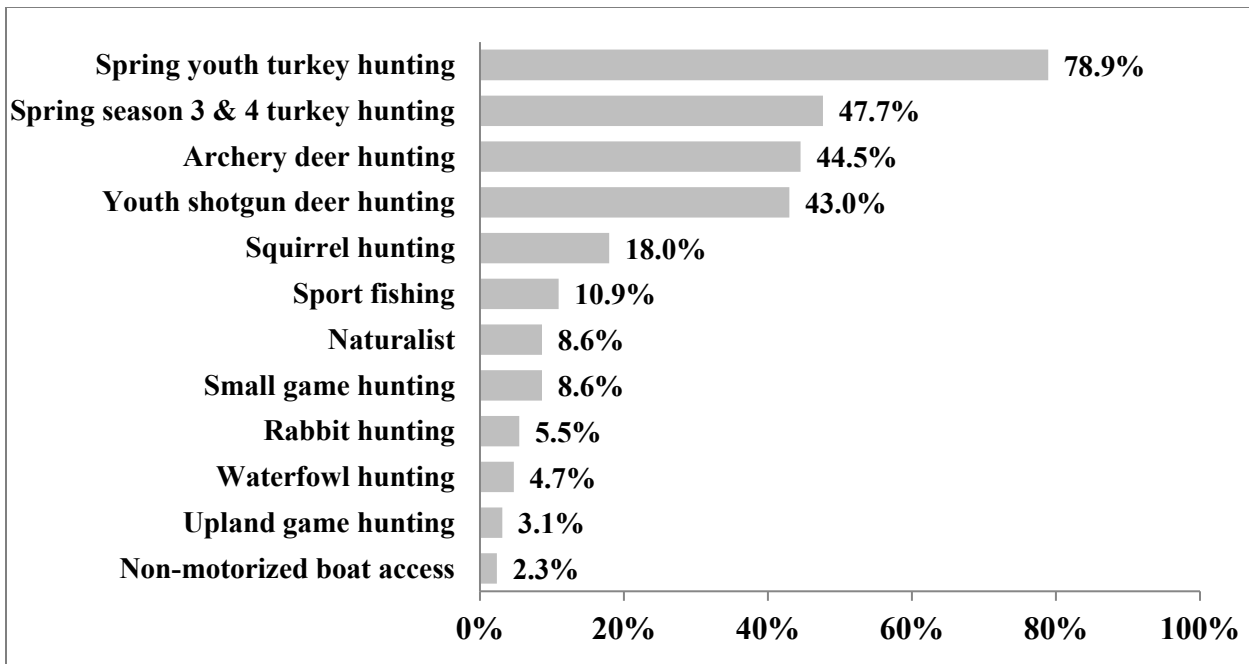


Figure 48. The type of game allowed to be hunted on properties after IRAP enrollment (Percentages are greater than 100 because respondents selected all that applied.)

Whereas the most allowed IRAP activity was turkey seasons, deer hunting was the most popular activity on the property among non-IRAP hunters (Figure 49). There were 10% fewer landowners who allowed non-IRAP deer hunting on their property after enrollment as compared to before IRAP enrollment. A similar trend was among other hunted species, but to a greater degree among turkey and small game. Ten percent of landowners had only IRAP participants on their property after enrollment (Figure 50). Fifty percent of landowners had 1-5 non-IRAP hunters on their property.



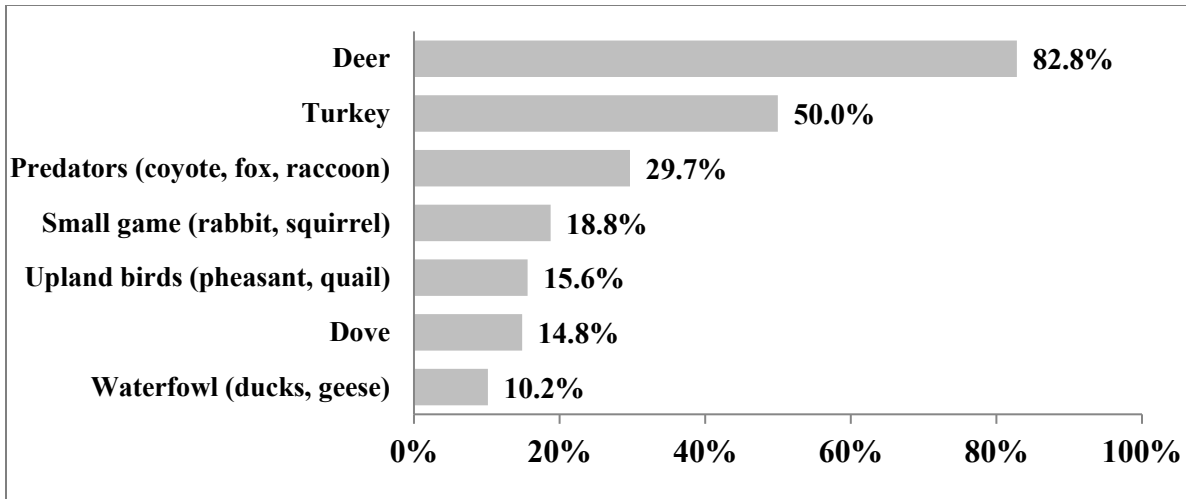


Figure 49. The type of game hunted after enrollment on landowners' properties by non-IRAP hunters (Percentages are greater than 100 because respondents selected all that applied.)

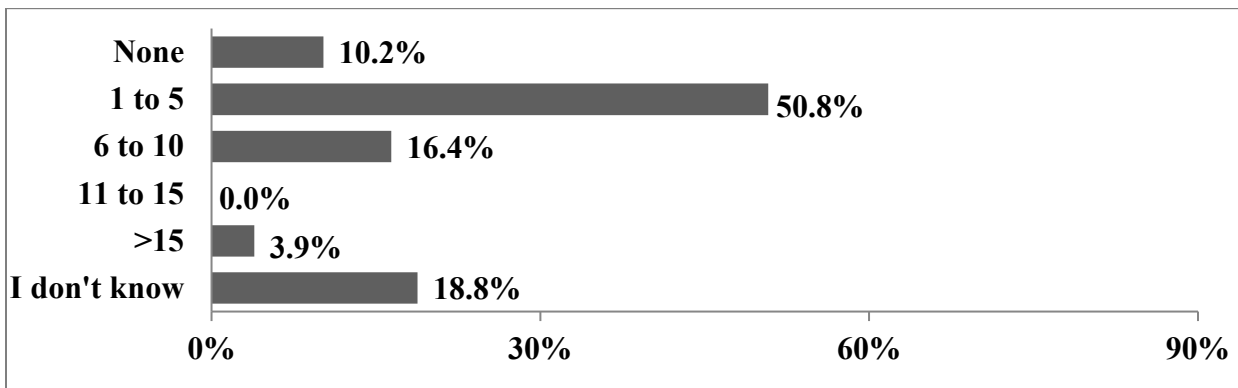


Figure 50. The number non-IRAP hunters hunting landowners' property after IRAP enrollment.

Following enrollment in IRAP, respondents perceived less need to contact an Illinois DNR Conservation Officer with problems on their property involving hunters (Figure 51). Prior to enrollment 17.9% of had to contact an officer every few years about hunters without permission and 68.3% had never made contact. There was no statistical difference in the number of times landowners contacted officers over IRAP hunters and non-IRAP hunters with permission. In addition, when asked about non-hunting recreationists the same pattern was noted (Figure 52).

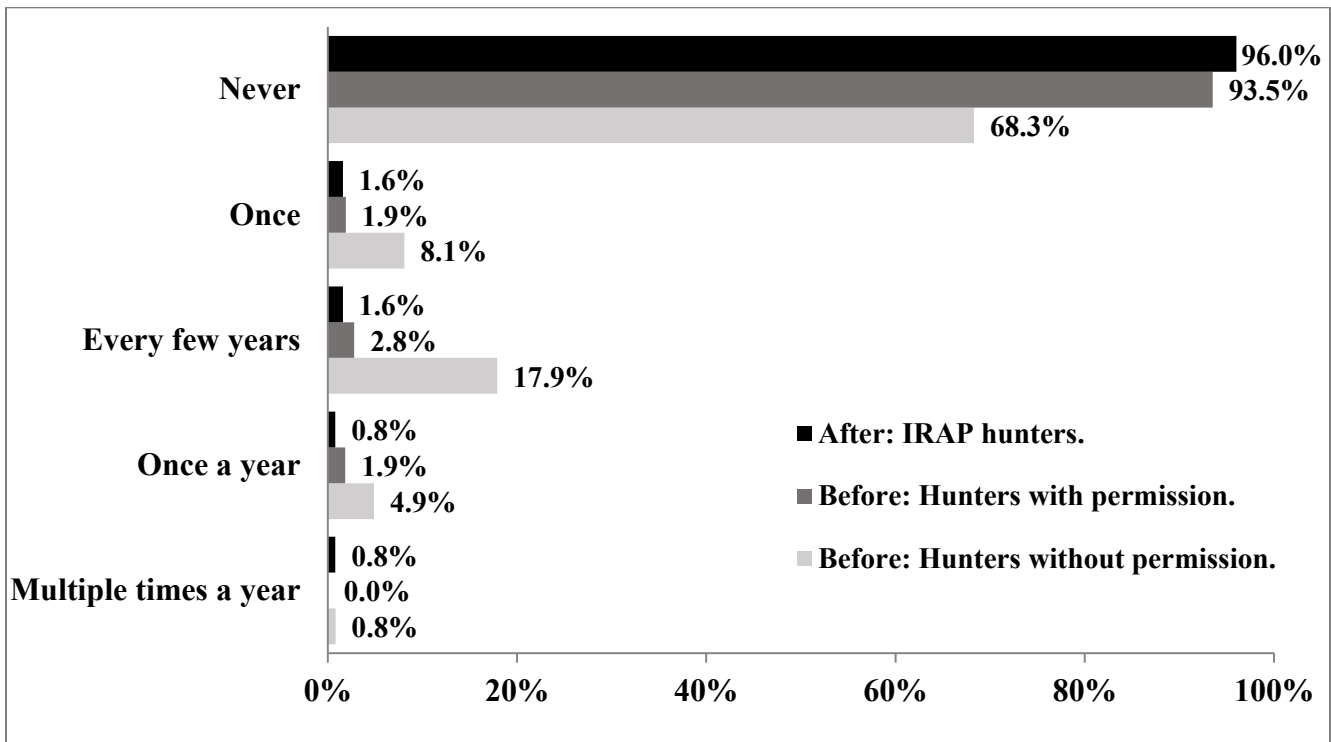


Figure 51. How often respondents needed to contact an Illinois DNR Conservation Officer with problems on their property involving hunters before and after IRAP enrollment.

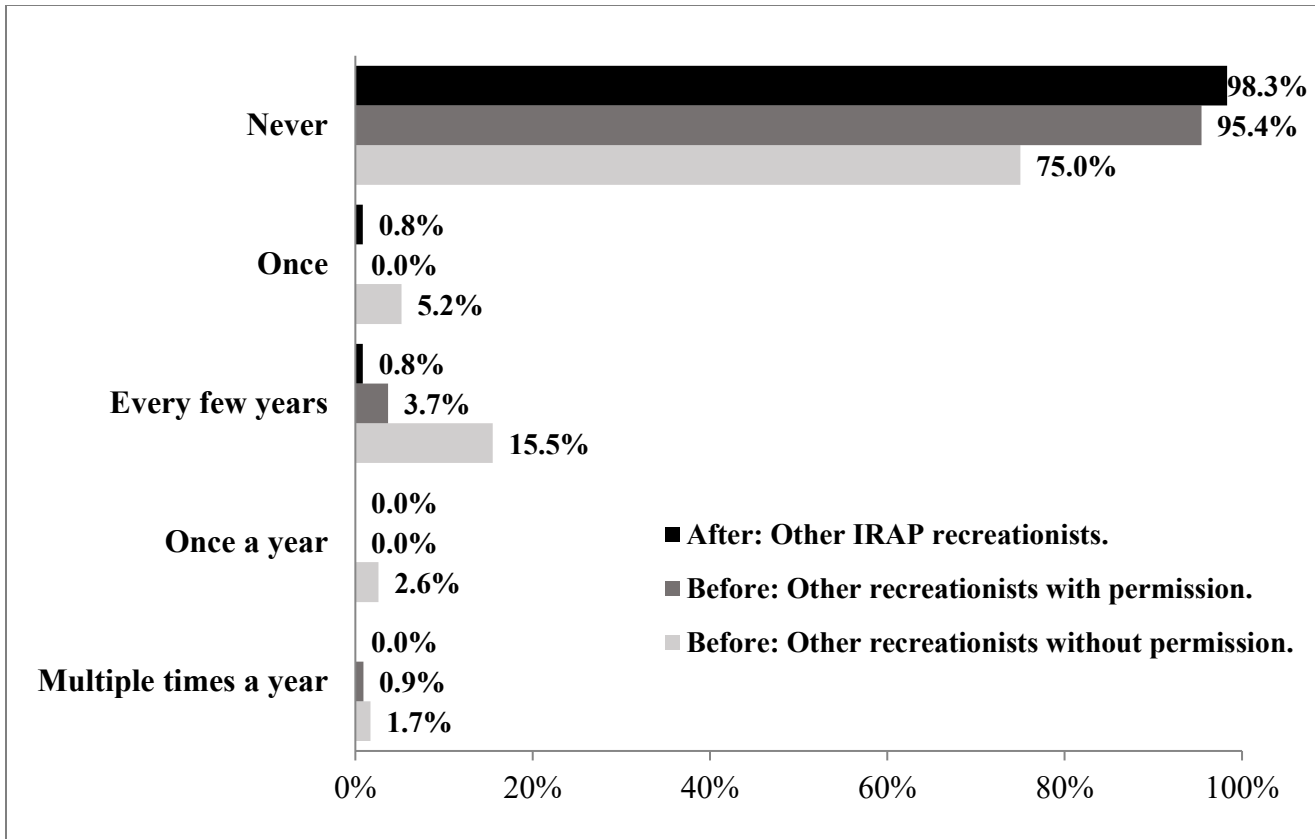


Figure 52. How often respondents needed to contact an Illinois DNR Conservation Officer with problems on their property involving nonhunting recreationists before and after IRAP enrollment.

When asked about their satisfaction with hunters who hunted their property, 84.4% of landowners were “satisfied” or “extremely satisfied” after IRAP enrollment whereas 91.2% were before IRAP enrollment (Figure 53). After enrollment there were 9% more landowners who were neither dissatisfied or satisfied as compared to before enrollment. There were 3.9% before and 1.6% landowners after IRAP enrollment who reported being dissatisfied with the hunters who hunted their property (Figure 53).

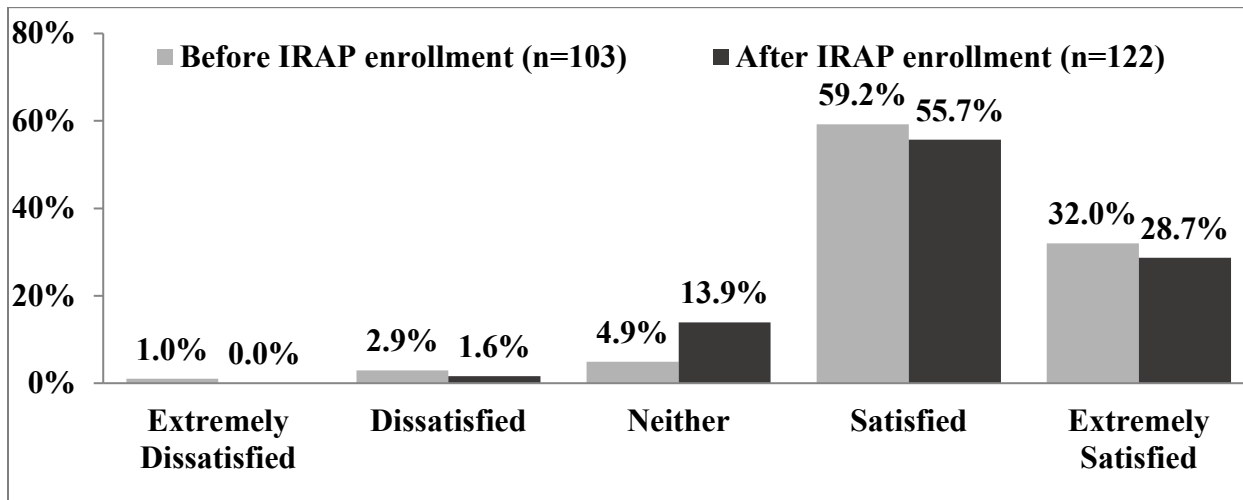


Figure 53. Satisfaction rating of respondents with the hunters who hunted their property before and after IRAP enrollment.

### **IRAP Experience**

Landowners indicated whether they were satisfied with the service they received from IDNR representatives regarding IRAP; 92.1% were satisfied or extremely satisfied with the service received (Table 19). Similarly, 92.1% of landowners were satisfied or extremely satisfied with their overall experience with IRAP. The timing of IRAP activities was the aspect landowners were least satisfied with and 6.3% of landowners were dissatisfied. Overall, 89.7% of landowners rated their experience with IRAP somewhere between good and excellent (Figure 54). Most landowners (72.3%) rated their overall experience with IRAP as extremely or very good, 17.5% as good, 7.1% as fair, and 3.2% rated it as poor (Figure 55).

Table 19. Satisfaction level for landowners experience with IRAP.

	Extremely Dissatisfied (%)	Dissatisfied (%)	Neither (%)	Satisfied (%)	Extremely Satisfied (%)	Mean (S.D) $\bar{x}$ ( $\sigma$ )
Overall IRAP experience.	0.0	1.6	6.3	51.2	40.9	4.31 (0.66)
Service you received from the Illinois DNR representative administering IRAP.	0.8	0.8	7.1	38.6	52.8	4.42 (0.73)
Procedures required for participation in the IRAP program.	0.0	3.2	7.1	57.1	32.5	4.19 (0.70)
Amount of communication between yourself and representatives for IRAP	1.6	3.2	10.3	44.4	40.5	4.19 (0.86)
Service and professionalism of persons who performed habitat work on your IRAP property.	0.8	0.8	12.4	31.4	54.5	4.38 (0.80)
Behavior of hunters who have visited your IRAP property.	0.0	0.0	19.0	45.2	35.7	4.17 (0.72)
Behavior of non-hunting recreationists who have visited your IRAP property.	0.0	0.9	43.5	32.4	23.1	3.78 (0.81)
The timing of IRAP activities.	1.6	4.7	11.0	51.2	31.5	4.06 (0.87)

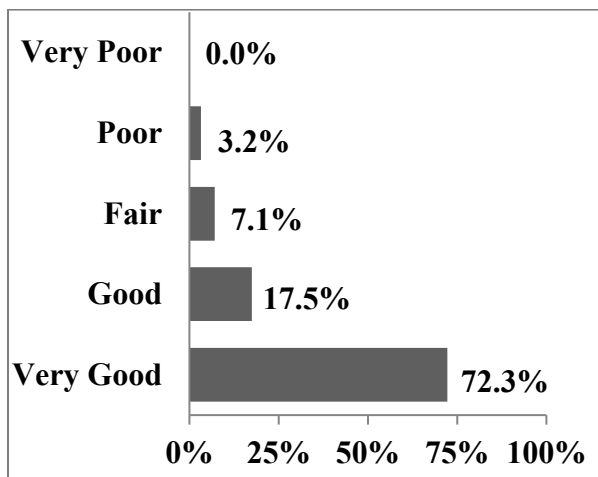


Figure 54. Overall experience with IRAP ( $n = 126$ ), reduced from a 7 point scale by combining extreme with very scores.

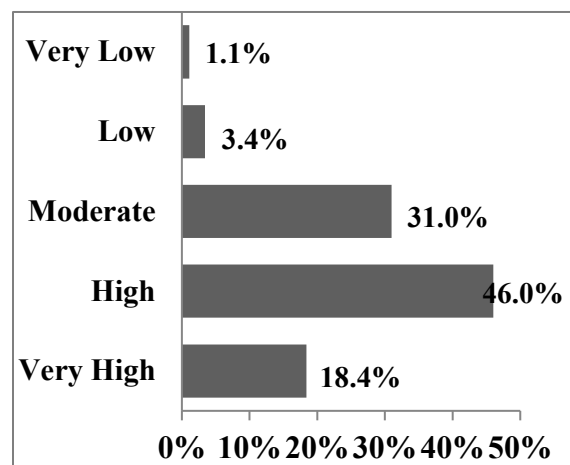


Figure 55. Value of habitat improvement made on property enrolled in IRAP ( $n = 87$ ).

Sixty eight percent of landowners had habitat projects implemented by IRAP on their property. Habitat projects increased the amount of habitat acres on the property for 78.2% of those landowners. When asked about to quality of habitat improvements made on the property which were enrolled in IRAP, 64.4% of landowners valued them high or very high, 4.5% valued them very low or low, and 31.0% found the improvements of moderate quality. When asked where they receive their information about habitat improvements and land management practices from state sponsored programs followed by federally sponsored programs (Table 20). Illinois recreation access -program (24.3%), National Wild Turkey Federation (22.9%), and Pheasants Forever (20.0) were the organizations sought out most often by landowners for the information. Mailed materials such as books and pamphlets (64.1%) were the medium preferred most often for learning habitat and land management practices (Table 21). The remaining preferred mediums were demonstrations in person and onsite visits (32.8%), online videos and DVDs (30.5%), and webinars, demonstrations, or conferences (20.3%).

Table 20. Sources used for information about habitat improvement and land management practices.

Source	Number of landowners	Percent of landowners
State sponsored programs (Illinois recreational access program, etc.).	84	65.6
Federally sponsored programs (CRP, CREP, WRP, etc.).	69	53.9
Other landowners who I personally know.	67	52.3
Hunting organizations (Ducks Unlimited, National Wild Turkey Federation, etc.)	44	34.4
Conservation non-governmental organizations (Nature Conservancy, Sierra Club, etc.).	20	15.6
Other landowners who I find online.	13	10.2
State and federal ecology/wildlife professionals	6	4.7
Hunting magazines	4	3.1

(Percentages are greater than 100 because respondents selected all that applied.)

Table 21. Sources used for information about habitat improvement and land management practices.

Source	Number of landowners	Percent of landowners
Illinois Recreation Access Program (IRAP)	17	24.3
National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf)	16	22.9
Pheasants Forever	14	20.0
Quail Forever	10	14.3
Ducks Unlimited	9	12.9
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)	8	11.4
Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)	7	10.0
Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)	5	7.1
Whitetails Unlimited	3	4.3
National Deer Association	3	4.3
US Department of Agriculture (USDA)	2	2.9
Quail and Upland Game Association (QUGA)	2	2.9
Tree Farm Organization/American Tree Farm System	2	2.9
Illinois Native Plant Society	2	2.9
US Fish and Wildlife Service	2	2.9
Illinois Forestry	1	1.4
Audubon Society	1	1.4
Missouri Conservation	1	1.4
Delta Waterfowl	1	1.4
Whitetail Institute	1	1.4
Internal staff	1	1.4
Facebook groups	1	1.4
Parklands	1	1.4
Forester	1	1.4
Local Farm Services Agency (FSA)	1	1.4
Reading	1	1.4
Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA)	1	1.4
Midwest Whitetail	1	1.4
UI Extension (Master Naturalists)	1	1.4
Illinois Habitat Strike Team (HST)	1	1.4
Mainly magazines and other landowners	1	1.4

Five IRAP participants responded that one of their neighbors complained about the behavior of IRAP hunters. No complaints were received about trappers, anglers, or other non-hunting recreationists. Eight IRAP landowners (6.4%) had to contact an IDNR conservation officer for an incident that occurred on their IRAP property. Nine incidents were reported: four were related to trespassing, two incidents of conflict with a neighbor, one incident of conflict among IRAP users, and one incident of stock damage. No landowners reported contacting an IDNR conservation officers about property damage, safety violations, vehicle use, or littering. Slightly more than two-thirds (69.6%) of respondents were contacted by an IDNR representative to check on how the program was progressing from the landowner’s perspective (Figure 56). Over four fifths (89.8%) of landowners felt that regular follow-up from IRAP personnel was important (Figure 57).

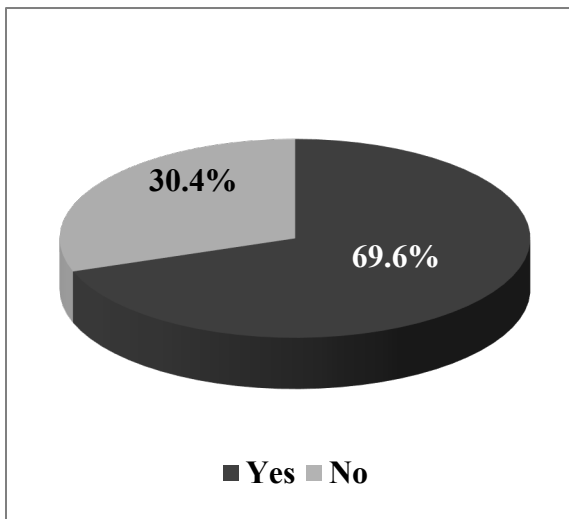


Figure 56. Percentage of respondents who were contacted this year by an IDNR representative to “check in” on how things were going ( $n = 119$ ).

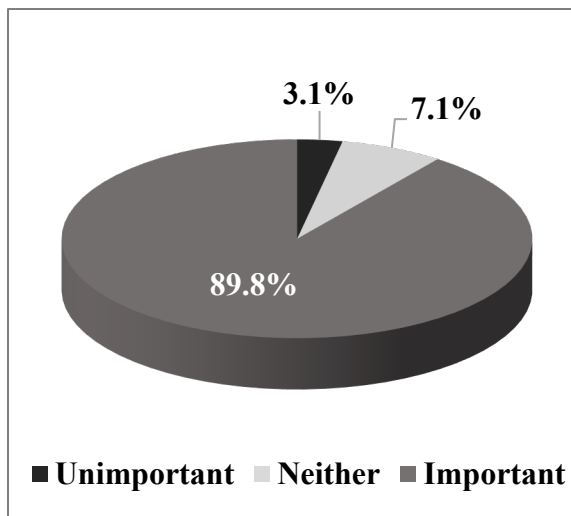


Figure 57. Importance of a regular “check in” by an IDNR representative ( $n = 124$ , 5-point scale: 1=extremely unimportant, 5=extremely important).



Almost two-thirds (63%) of landowners had recommendations for IRAP. Of those who had recommendations, the most mentioned were for parking and property access. The third most common suggestion was written in and related to follow through and completion of work. Fourteen percent of landowners indicated there was a need for IRAP to complete or finish all the projects or work that was promised (Table 22). Other write in recommendations included a desire for more input, contact, and communication from IRAP personnel.

Table 22. Sources used for information about habitat improvement and land management practices.

	Number of landowners	Percent of landowners
Parking	8	18
Property access	6	14
Follow through on projects (some things mentioned were never done or completed), Do something & get the job done so I would not have to resign	6	14
Participant behavior	5	11
More contact with IRAP agent for my area; more communication from IRAP	5	11
Hunter feedback (areas of improvement and satisfaction)	4	9
Additional activities	3	7
Vehicle use	3	7
Let the landowner know who, where, when and vehicle of hunters	3	7
Safety	2	5
More & easier access to habitat work cost assistance and/or higher stipend	2	5
Do only youth hunt	2	5
Feedback from results; how as an owner can I improve my land; landowner/hunter feedback	2	5
Dependable aerial contractors	1	2
Habitat management teams' availability	1	2
Aerial spraying	1	2

A majority (87.3%) of landowners were likely or extremely likely to recommend a friend enroll in IRAP. Similarly, 89.6% of landowners were likely or extremely likely to re-enroll in IRAP,  $\bar{x} = 4.24$  on a 5-point scale (extremely unlikely to extremely likely). The number of landowners who were likely to increase the acres enrolled was close to the number who were unlikely, and 36.6 % were likely, 31.3% were neither, and 32.1% were unlikely to enroll additional acres in their next contract (Table 23). Participants were mostly likely to have recommended IRAP to private landowners (76%), hunters (41%), and anglers (9%; Figure 58)

Table 23. Likelihood of performing the following actions involving IRAP ( $n = 112$ ).

	Extremely Unlikely (%)	Unlikely (%)	Neither (%)	Likely (%)	Extremely Likely (%)	Mean (S.D)
Recommend a friend to enroll in IRAP	2.4	3.2	7.1	50.0	37.3	4.17 (0.87)
Re-enrolling in IRAP	4.0	1.6	4.8	45.6	44.0	4.24 (0.93)
Enroll additional acres in IRAP	9.8	22.3	31.3	22.3	14.3	3.09 (1.19)

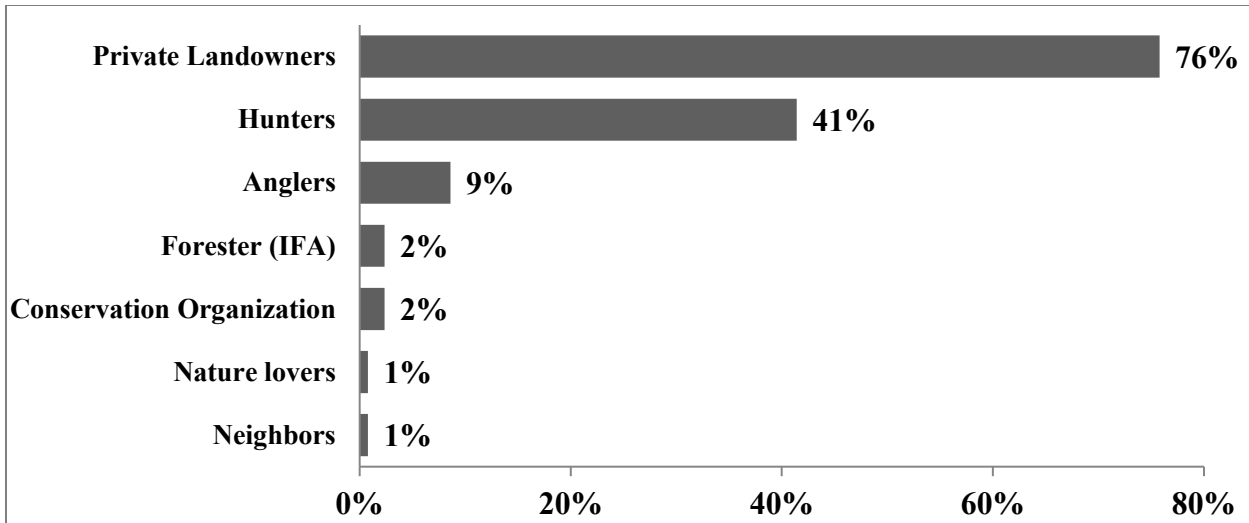


Figure 58. Groups which landowners have recommended try IRAP ( $n = 105$ ).  
 (Percentages are greater than 100 because respondents selected all that applied.)

Ninety five percent of landowners agreed to some extent that IRAP has provided additional hunting opportunities, and 87.3% agreed that IRAP has introduced new hunters to the sport of hunting (Table 24). Over one third (40.7%) of respondents agreed IRAP has decreased the number of hunters leaving the sport, whereas 66.4% of respondents disagreed IRAP had no impact on retaining hunters in Illinois.

Table 24. Level of agreement or disagreement with statements about IRAP.

	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neither (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Mean (S.D)
IRAP has introduced new youth and adult hunters to the sport of hunting.	0.0	0.0	12.7	50.8	36.5	4.24 (0.66)
IRAP has provided additional hunting opportunities for those without hunting access in Illinois.	0.0	0.0	4.8	50.0	45.2	4.4 (0.58)
IRAP has provided hunting opportunities to the same people who hunted my property.	13.1	16.4	29.5	24.6	16.4	3.15 (1.26)
IRAP has decreased the number of hunters leaving the sport.	10.6	8.9	39.8	30.1	10.6	3.21 (1.1)
IRAP has displaced hunters who previously hunted my property.	30.0	33.3	28.3	5.0	3.3	2.18 (1.03)
IRAP has had no impact on retaining hunters in Illinois.	26.4	40.0	28.0	4.0	1.6	2.14 (0.91)
IRAP has had no impact on recruiting hunters in Illinois.	28.0	40.0	27.2	2.4	2.4	2.11 (0.93)

## Discussion

Landowners participating in IRAP reported that they were satisfied with the program and 89.8% rated their overall experience as good or very good. Ninety percent of landowners were satisfied or extremely satisfied with their overall IRAP experience. Most respondents (87.3%) reported that they were likely to recommend a friend to enroll in IRAP, and 89.6% were likely to reenroll in the program. Almost all (95.3%) landowner respondents were currently enrolled in IRAP at the time of this study. Although slightly more than half of landowners had concerns prior enrolling their land in IRAP, 90% of them felt their concerns were addressed. These concerns included behavior of recreationists on their property, personal liability, and possible damage to their property. Among the few whose concerns were not addressed the quality and completion of habitat work was the primary complaint. IRAP enrollment, landowners needed to contact IDNR Conservation Officers about problems involving hunters on their property less than before enrollment. Overall, respondents had less dissatisfaction with hunters after enrolling in IRAP, and were more likely to choose neither satisfied or dissatisfied.

Many respondents chose to enroll their land because they wanted to improve habitat for wildlife, help recruit new and youth hunters, to receive financial incentives, and to receive technical assistance with habitat improvements. Sixty-two percent of landowners valued habitat improvements made on the property through IRAP enrollment as high or very high. Over 90% of respondents were satisfied or extremely satisfied with the service received from IDNR representatives, and 84% were satisfied with the amount of communications with IDNR representatives. Ninety percent of respondents felt that a regular “check in” by an IDNR representative is important; however, slightly more than two-thirds (69.4%) of respondents were contacted during the 12-month period prior to this study.

Most landowners allowed spring youth turkey hunting on their property. Deer was the most common species hunted on landowners' properties before IRAP. Turkey was most common after IRAP, most likely due to the Spring Youth Turkey Hunting program.

Many landowners reported that, prior to enrollment, they have denied access to hunters asking for permission on their property, but 84% have allowed hunters on their property prior to IRAP enrollment. Friends, neighbors, and family were the most common people that were allowed to hunt on their property, typically only 1-5 people a year. After IRAP enrollment hunting by the landowner, family, friends, and neighbors all decreased, and 20% of landowners hunted less often. Some recommendations landowners had for the program were knowing when hunters are signed up to hunt, knowing names of the hunters on their property, property access and parking. More contact with IRAP agents and completion of habitat work were concerns that were written-in.

### 3. Illinois Statewide Recreationist Survey

#### Results

We surveyed 3,000 Illinois resident hunting license purchasers; 112 were removed as undeliverable, which reduced the sample to 2,888. We received 835 usable questionnaires for a 29% response rate.

#### Recreationist Profile

Respondents were mostly male (94.7%) (Figure 59), had lived in Illinois an average of 51 years, and were an average of 55 years old. Eighty-eight percent of respondents reported they had internet access and 80% of those had high speed internet. Most respondents lived in a rural area (42.1%) or small town (24.5%) (Figure 60). Approximately 41.5% of respondents had a total gross household income of \$90,000 or more, whereas 45.4% had a household income of less than \$75,000 (Figure 61). Almost half (42.6%) of respondents had completed high school or had their GED, whereas 27.2% had a bachelor's or terminal degree (Figure 62).

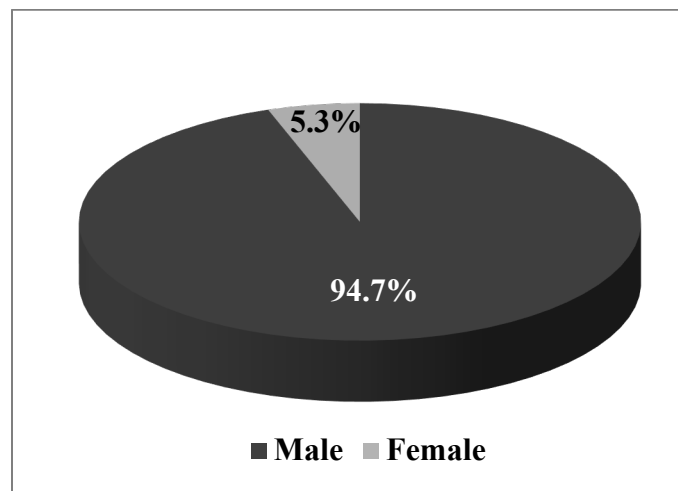


Figure 59. Gender distribution of respondents ( $n = 835$ ).

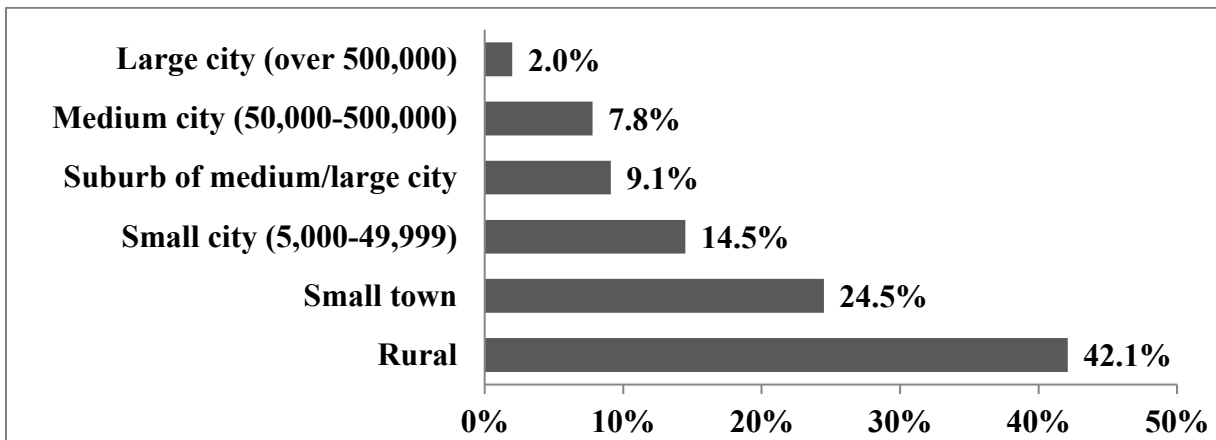


Figure 60. Type of area respondents currently live in ( $n = 834$ ).

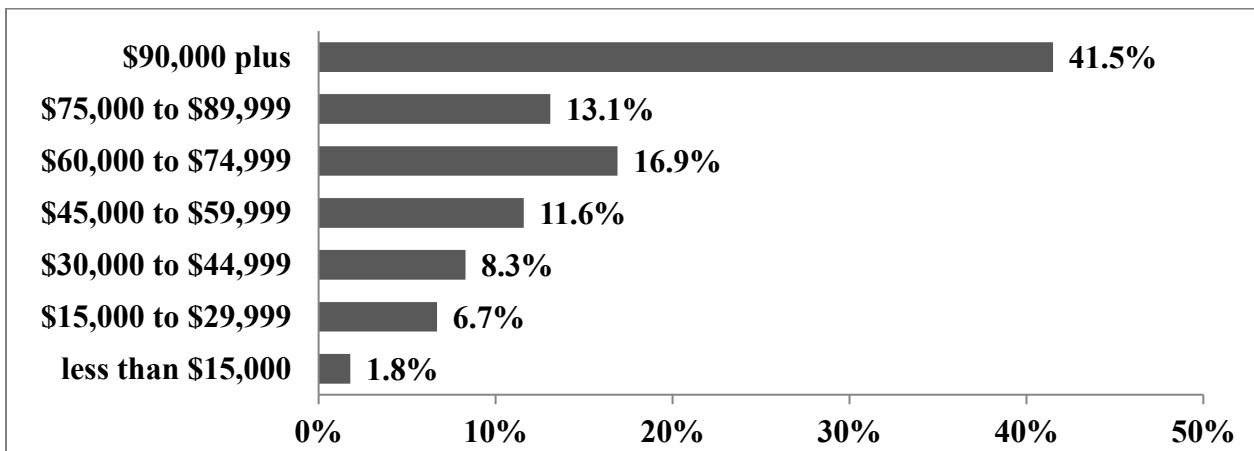


Figure 61. Approximate total (gross) household income ( $n = 732$ ).

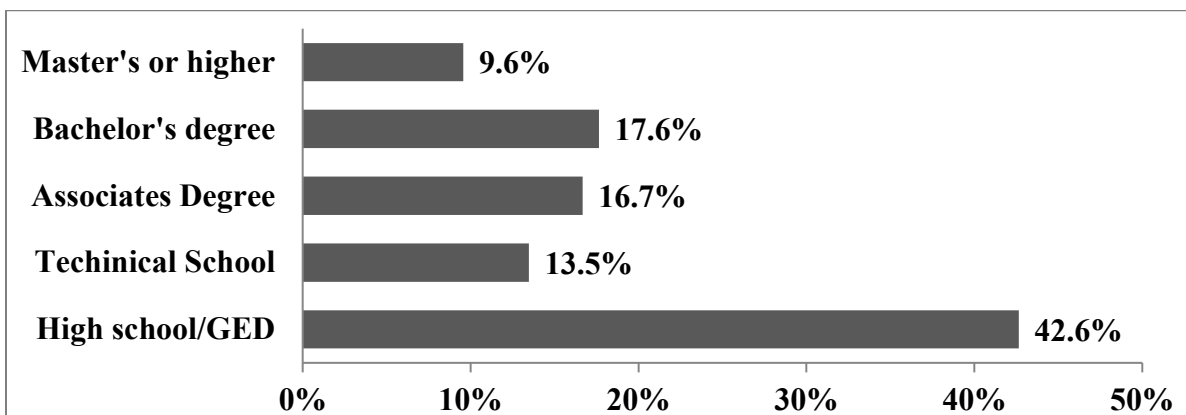


Figure 62. Highest level of education completed ( $n = 816$ ).



## Outdoor Recreation in Illinois

Twenty-eight percent of respondents reported having children under the age of 18 living at home. The most common outdoor activities children participated in were fishing (86%), hunting (69%), and camping (58%) (Figure 63). The most common write-in values included 4- wheeling, ball sports, ball sports, and shooting.

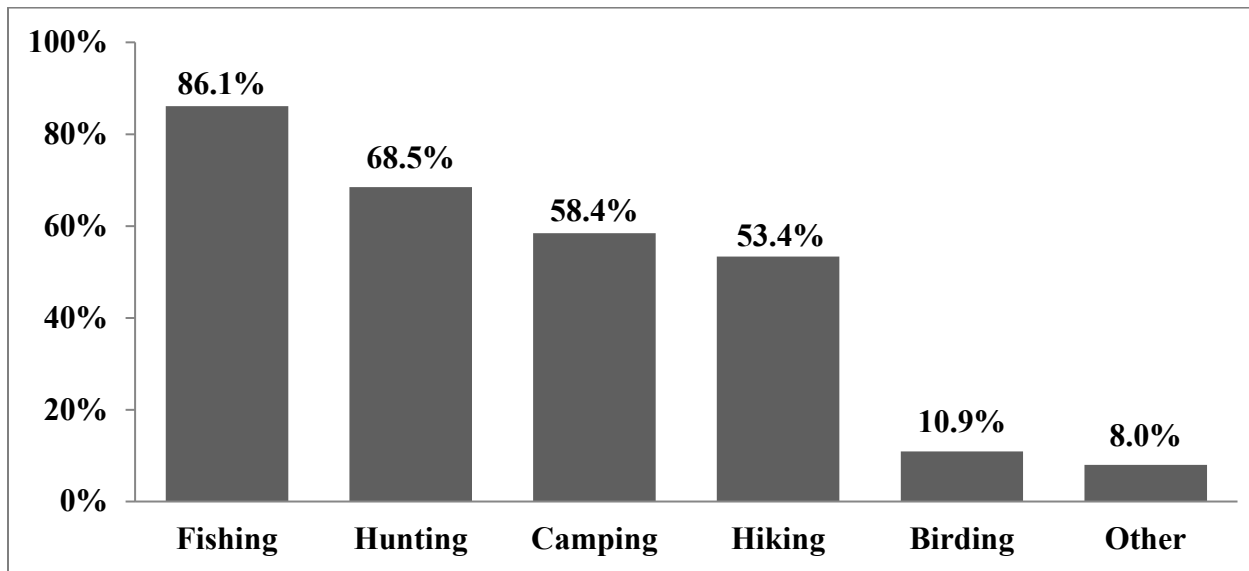


Figure 63. Outdoor activities children (<18 years old) participate in ( $n = 238$ ).

Eighty-seven percent of respondents ranked hunting as either moderately or very important, and 72 % ranked fishing as moderately or very important (Table 25). The most frequented types of land that recreationists in Illinois used were public lands (34%) and private property owned by someone else (34%) (Figure 64).

Table 25. Importance rankings for recreational activities.

	Not at all important (%)	Slightly important (%)	Moderately important (%)	Very important (%)	I do not participate (%)
Hunting ( <i>n</i> =835)	1.0	2.4	9.6	86.5	0.6
Hiking ( <i>n</i> =834)	10.0	19.4	25.8	23.0	21.8
Birding ( <i>n</i> =834)	17.1	18.9	15.1	9.8	39.0
Fishing ( <i>n</i> =834)	2.5	7.2	18.2	66.7	5.4
Boating ( <i>n</i> =834)	7.6	16.2	26.5	33.2	16.5

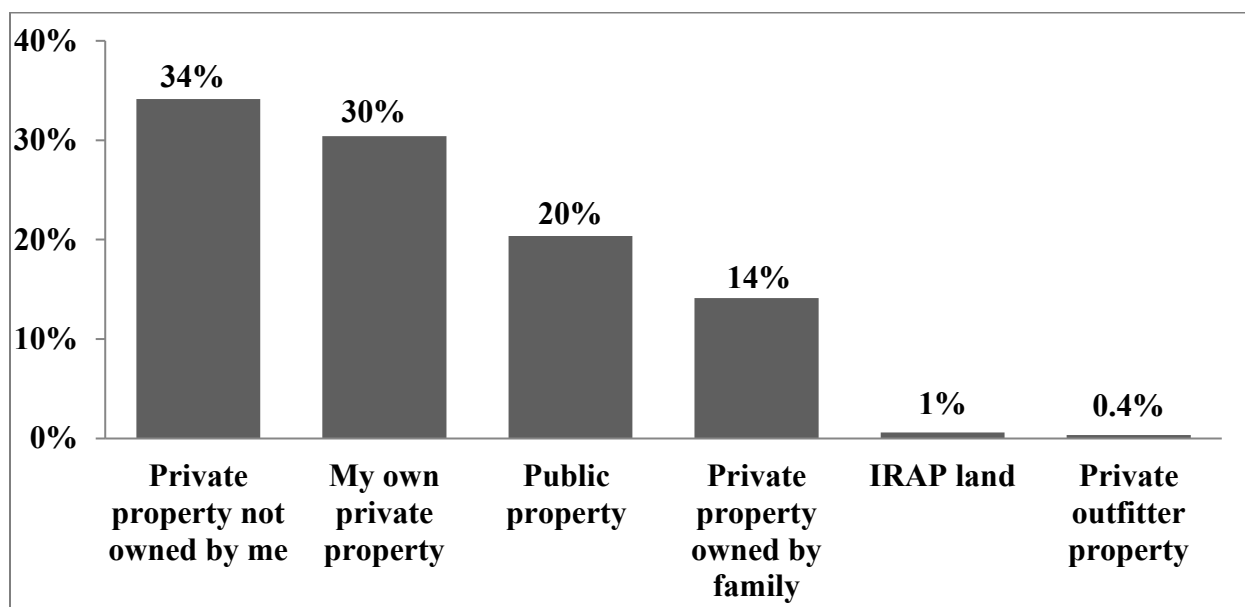


Figure 64. The type of land used most often for hunting or recreation purposes (*n* = 835).

Sixty percent of respondents agreed that it was difficult to find places to hunt or recreate in Illinois, and 80% agreed that gaining access to private properties was difficult (Table 26). Four-fifths (84.8%) of recreationists agreed that landowners have become less willing to grant permission to access their land; 14% of respondents agreed that it was easy to establish and maintain private landowner contacts. Almost two-thirds (63%) of recreationists agreed that some type of hunter/recreation program was needed to improve access to private land. Recreationists in Illinois

generally preferred to access private land over public land for outdoor recreation (67%). Forty percent of recreationists agreed they have been unsuccessful in their attempts to gain private land access, whereas one-third disagreed, and one-third neither agreed nor disagreed. Two-thirds of respondents agreed that public land used for hunting or recreation was too crowded.

Table 26. Recreationists' level of agreement with statements regarding land access ( $n = 824$ ).

	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neither (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Mean <sup>a</sup> (S.D.)
It is difficult to find places to hunt/recreate in Illinois.	4.7	17.2	17.1	36.2	24.7	3.59 (1.17)
It is difficult to gain access to private properties for hunting/recreation activities in Illinois.	2.3	5.6	12.0	38.3	41.9	4.12 (0.98)
Landowners have become less willing to grant permission to hunt/recreate on private land.	1.7	3.5	10.0	40.8	44.0	4.22 (0.89)
It has become easy to establish and maintain private landowner contacts in Illinois.	20.2	35.0	30.4	10.8	3.5	2.42 (1.04)
Some type of hunter/recreation program is needed to improve access to private land in Illinois.	6.5	7.9	22.4	36.4	26.8	3.69 (1.14)
I prefer to access private land over public land for outdoor recreation in Illinois.	2.1	6.6	24.4	39.2	27.8	3.84 (0.97)
I do not have time to meet with private landowners to obtain access to private land.	10.0	28.3	35.7	18.8	7.1	2.85 (1.07)
I feel comfortable approaching private landowners to obtain access to private land.	8.2	25.2	22.1	36.5	8.0	3.11 (1.12)
I have the ability to approach private landowners and obtain access to private lands.	6.5	20.6	25.9	41.2	5.8	3.19 (1.04)
I have been unsuccessful in my attempts to gain private land access in Illinois.	5.0	17.2	37.9	30.3	9.6	3.22 (1.00)
Public land for hunting/recreation in Illinois is too crowded.	1.6	5.6	27.1	40.0	25.8	3.83 (0.93)

<sup>a</sup>1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree

## **IRAP Participation**

Three-quarters (75.6%) of recreationists surveyed were not aware of IRAP before receiving the study questionnaire (Figure 65). Of the respondents who were already aware of IRAP, most heard of the program through the IDNR website (56%) or a friend (28%) (Figure 66). Most common write in values were from an IDNR employee or game warden, other hunters, IDNR hunters digest, and the previous version of this questionnaire.

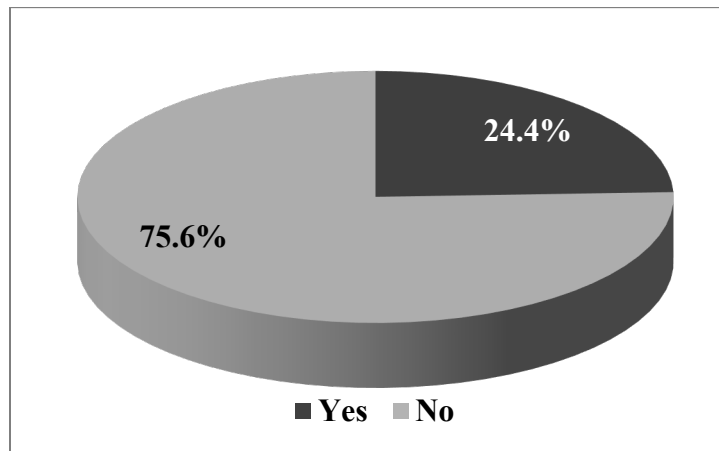


Figure 65. Percentage of respondents who were aware of IRAP before this survey ( $n = 835$ ).

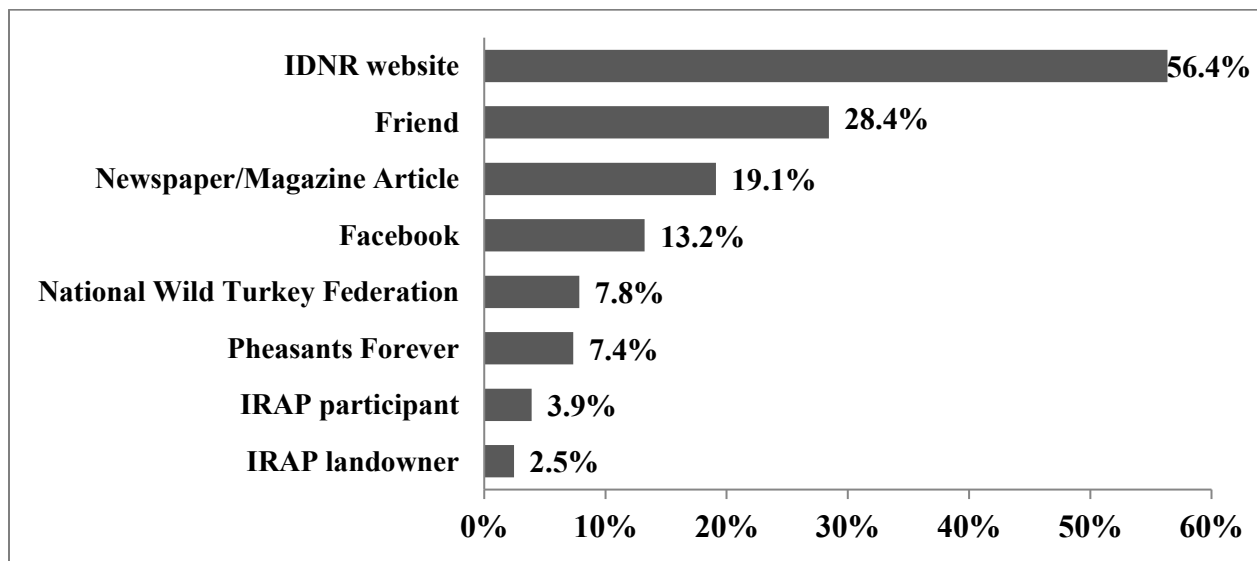


Figure 66. How respondents became aware of IRAP ( $n = 204$ ).

Among those who were aware of IRAP, 6.9% applied to access IRAP properties (Figure 67). More than half (62%) reapplied after not being selected (Figure 68). Participants were asked about their likelihood to participate in IRAP in the future; 35.4% reported that they were likely to participate, 43.9% were unlikely, and 20.7% were neither (Table 27). Whereas 48.4% were likely to recommend it to a friend and 45.6% were likely to try IRAP sites that are new to them. Of the respondents who were likely to participate in IRAP, 62% were interested in archery deer hunting, 59% were interested in sport fishing, and 55% were interested in upland game hunting (Table 28). Sixty-eight percent of respondents would hunt more often in Illinois if IRAP participation was likely, whereas 30% reported they would hunt the same amount. Sixty-two percent of hunters who are likely to participate in IRAP plan on hunting more or much more often whereas 36% plan to hunt about the same.

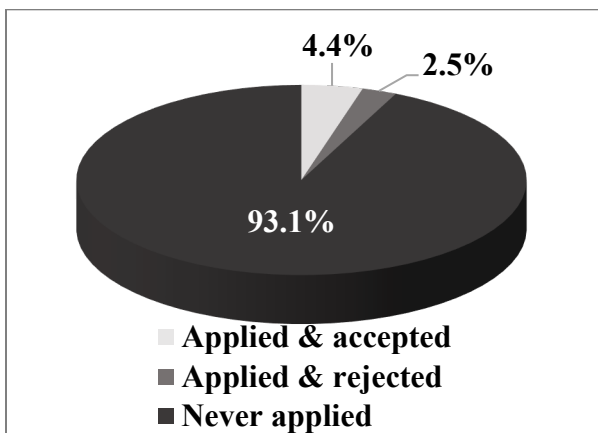


Figure 67. Percentage of respondents who have applied to access IRAP properties ( $n = 203$ ).

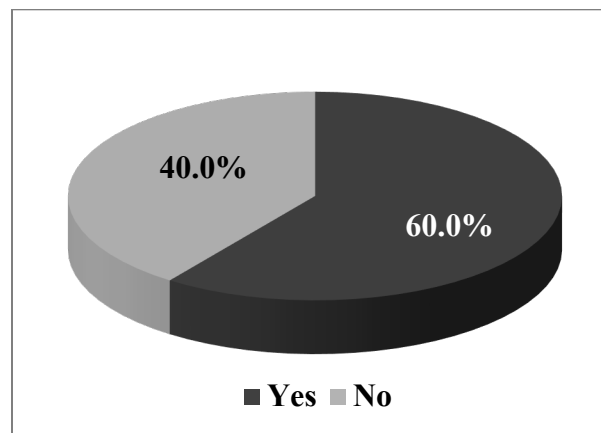


Figure 68. Respondents who reapplied to access IRAP properties after not being selected ( $n = 5$ ).

Table 27. Likelihood of performing the following actions involving IRAP ( $n = 834$ ).

	Extremely Unlikely (%)	Unlikely (%)	Neither (%)	Likely (%)	Extremely Likely (%)	Mean (S.D.)
How likely are you to participate in IRAP?	18.3	25.6	20.7	28.1	7.2	2.80 (1.23)
How likely are you to seek permission to hunt private property not enrolled in IRAP?	15.4	21.8	19.3	34.4	9.1	3.00 (1.24)
How likely are you to try IRAP sites that are new to you?	16.4	19.8	18.2	34.8	10.8	3.04 (1.28)
How likely are you to try sites newly enrolled into the IRAP program?	15.3	20.4	19.4	33.7	11.2	3.05 (1.26)
How likely are you to recommend participating in IRAP to a friend?	12.6	16.1	23.0	37.8	10.6	3.18 (1.20)

Table 28. IRAP activity likely hunters are interested in trying ( $n = 295$ ).

	Number of hunters	Percent of hunters
Archery Deer	183	62%
Sport Fishing	174	59%
Upland Game	162	55%
Small Game	147	50%
Youth Turkey 3 & 4	115	39%
Waterfowl	96	33%
Youth Shotgun Deer	74	25%
Youth Turkey	60	20%

Those unlikely to participate in IRAP were influenced by their access to their own property (41%), lack of free time (24%), and health problems (18%; Table 29). Write in responses focused on currently having access to more exclusive properties for hunting (e.g. owned by family, friends, or leased), hesitation due to a lack thorough understanding of IRAP, and not liking use of public funds to lease private land. A minority of Illinois recreationists (3.0%) wanted to participate in IRAP because they wanted to try hunting for the first time (Table 30). Forty percent of respondents wanted to participate in IRAP to find private access for outdoor activities in Illinois, and 43% wanted to participate to hunt or recreate in new places in Illinois.

Table 29. Reasons that influenced hunters that are unlikely to try IRAP ( $n = 367$ ).

Reason	Number of hunters	Percent of hunters
Own my own property	150	41%
Lack of free time	88	24%
Health problems	66	18%
Lack of interest	66	18%
Too many regulations	46	13%
Not enough wildlife	42	11%
More places to hunt	35	10%
Regulations are too complicated	30	8%
Not enough IRAP properties close to home	25	7%
Too expensive	22	6%
Lack of hunting partners	21	6%
Unable to be drawn for IRAP	11	3%
Poor economy	10	3%
Not enough IRAP activities	9	2%

\*Write-in responses provided by participants

(Percentages add up to >100 because respondents selected all that applied.)

Table 30. Level of agreement with statements about participation in IRAP ( $n = 822$ ).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean <sup>a</sup> (S.D.)
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	
I want to participate in IRAP	13.8	18.9	33.7	26.4	7.2	2.94 (1.14)
I want to participate in IRAP because I want to try hunting for the first time.	41.4	22.6	33.1	2.1	0.9	1.98 (0.95)
I want to participate in IRAP to find private land access for outdoor activities in Illinois.	15.3	16.6	27.4	27.4	13.3	3.07 (1.26)
I want to participate in IRAP to hunt/recreate new places in Illinois.	14.5	15.9	26.7	29.0	13.9	3.12 (1.25)
I want to participate in IRAP to spend time with my family	15.8	17.4	35.0	22.3	9.5	2.92 (1.19)

<sup>a</sup>1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree

### Hunting in Illinois

Respondents reported hunting an average of 37 years, and an average of 35 years in Illinois.

Ninety-four percent of hunters reported hunting in Illinois during the 2020-21 seasons and 96.2% considered themselves a hunter (Figure 69). Among those who did not hunt in 2020-21, 75% had hunted within the last 5 years.

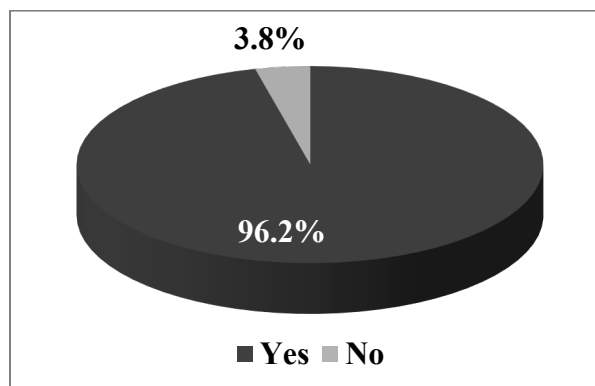


Figure 69. Percentage of respondents who consider themselves a hunter ( $n = 835$ ).



Respondents were asked to rate a series of questions about hunting on a scale of 1-7, with one being strongly disagree and seven being strongly agree. In response to the statement “Hunting is one of the most important activities in my life,” 83% of respondents agreed to some extent (Table 31). Two-thirds of respondents agreed to strongly agreed that they spent a lot of time in the off-season planning for hunting.

Table 31. Level of agreement with statements about hunting ( $n = 800$ ).

	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neither (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Mean <sup>a</sup> (S.D.)
Hunting is one of the most important activities in my life.	0.4	10.0	7.0	48.8	33.9	4.06 (0.92)
I spend a lot of time in the off-season planning for hunting.	0.9	18.7	13.0	49.6	17.9	3.65 (1.01)
I plan vacation time around hunting seasons.	3.9	22.3	7.9	41.1	24.8	3.61 (1.19)
Hunting determines much of my lifestyle.	4.2	27.1	17.5	34.6	16.6	3.32 (1.16)
I spend a lot of time before the season scouting the area I will hunt.	2.5	20.4	14.6	46.5	16.0	3.53 (1.06)
I would rather hunt than do any other recreation.	2.7	24.1	18.8	31.9	22.4	3.47 (1.16)

<sup>a</sup>1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree

Approximately 73% of respondents reported that they hunted with family, 63% hunted with friends, and 61% hunted by themselves (Figure 70). Deer was the most commonly hunted species (84%) followed by small game (53%), turkey (45%), upland birds (39%), predators (38%), dove (37%), and waterfowl (27%) (Figure 71).

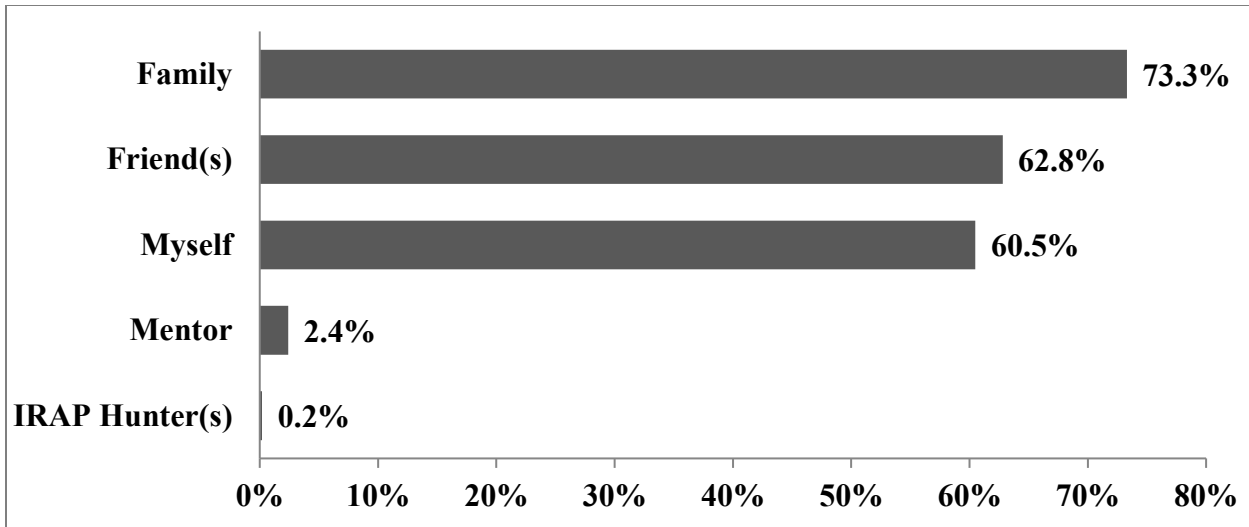


Figure 70. People who respondents reported hunting with ( $n = 835$ ).

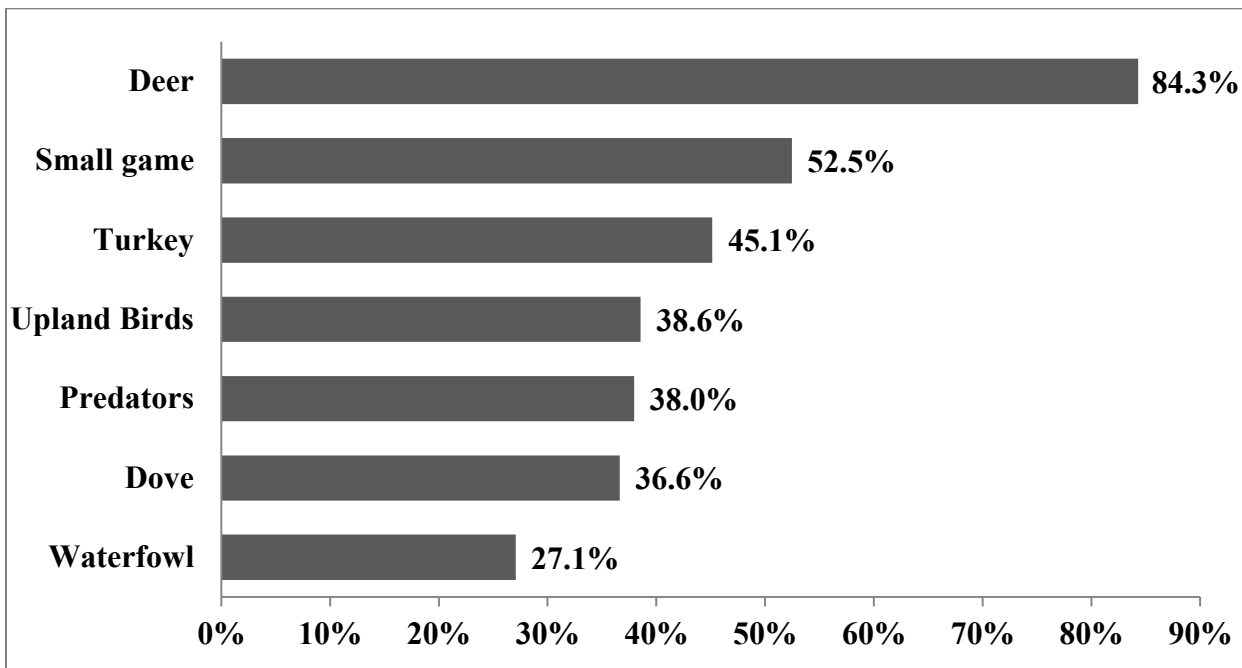


Figure 71. Types of game hunted ( $n = 835$ ).

Slightly less than half of hunters (40%) traveled between 1-25 miles to hunt and close to a third (31.5%) traveled over 50 miles (Figure 72). Game species hunted less now than 5 years ago, included small game (40%), dove (28%), and 198 hunters (25%) reported decreasing for none (Figure 73).

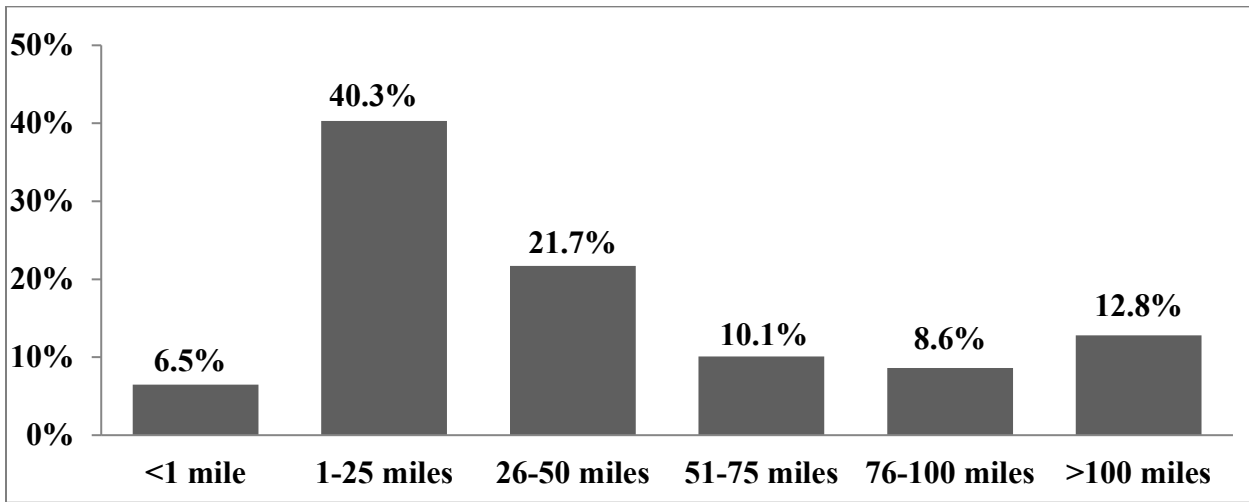


Figure 72. Average traveling distance to hunt in Illinois ( $n = 803$ ).

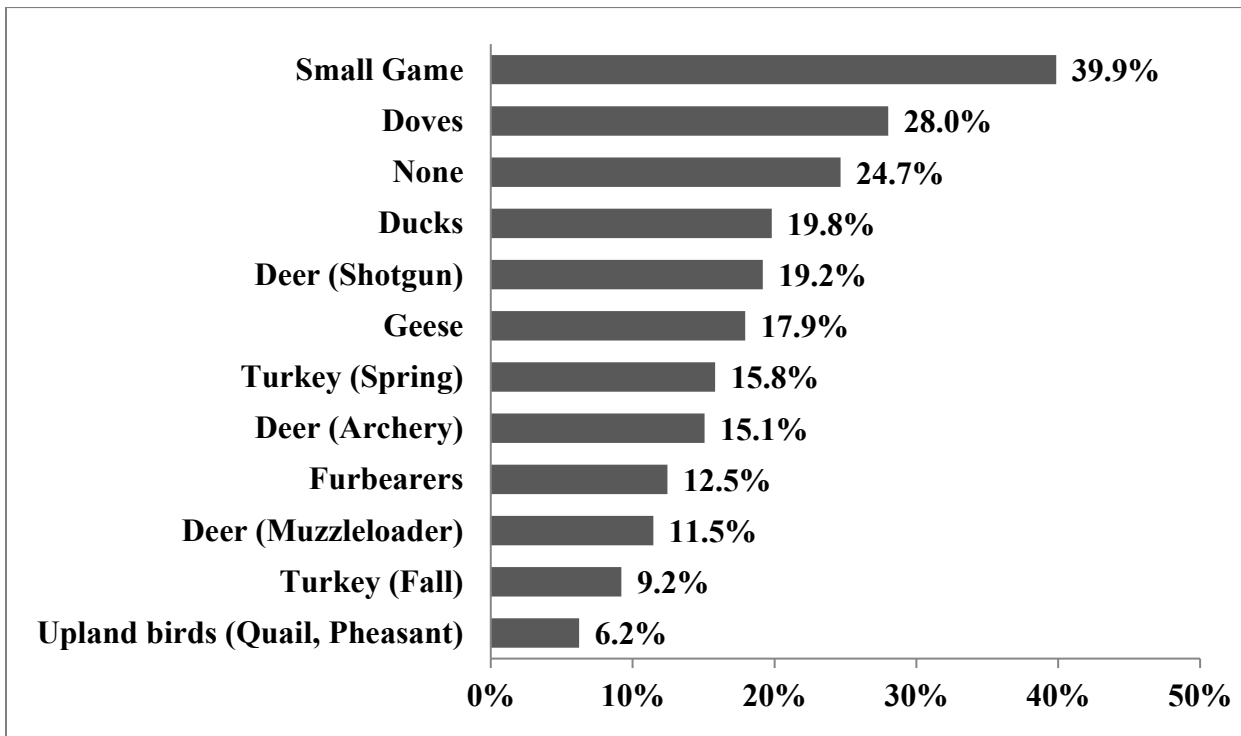


Figure 73. Types of game hunted less now than five years ago ( $n = 803$ ).

Reasons cited most for decreased hunting effort included no land to hunt on (42%), not enough game (34%), and lack of time (33%; Figure 74). Almost half (44%) of respondents indicated they were hunting no species more now than they had five years ago (Figure 75). Deer, both archery and shotgun, was the most reported species hunted more now than five years ago. Of those who have increased their hunting effort, the most reported reasons were increased free time (38%), increased interest in hunting (27%), and availability of land to hunt (23%) (Figure 76).

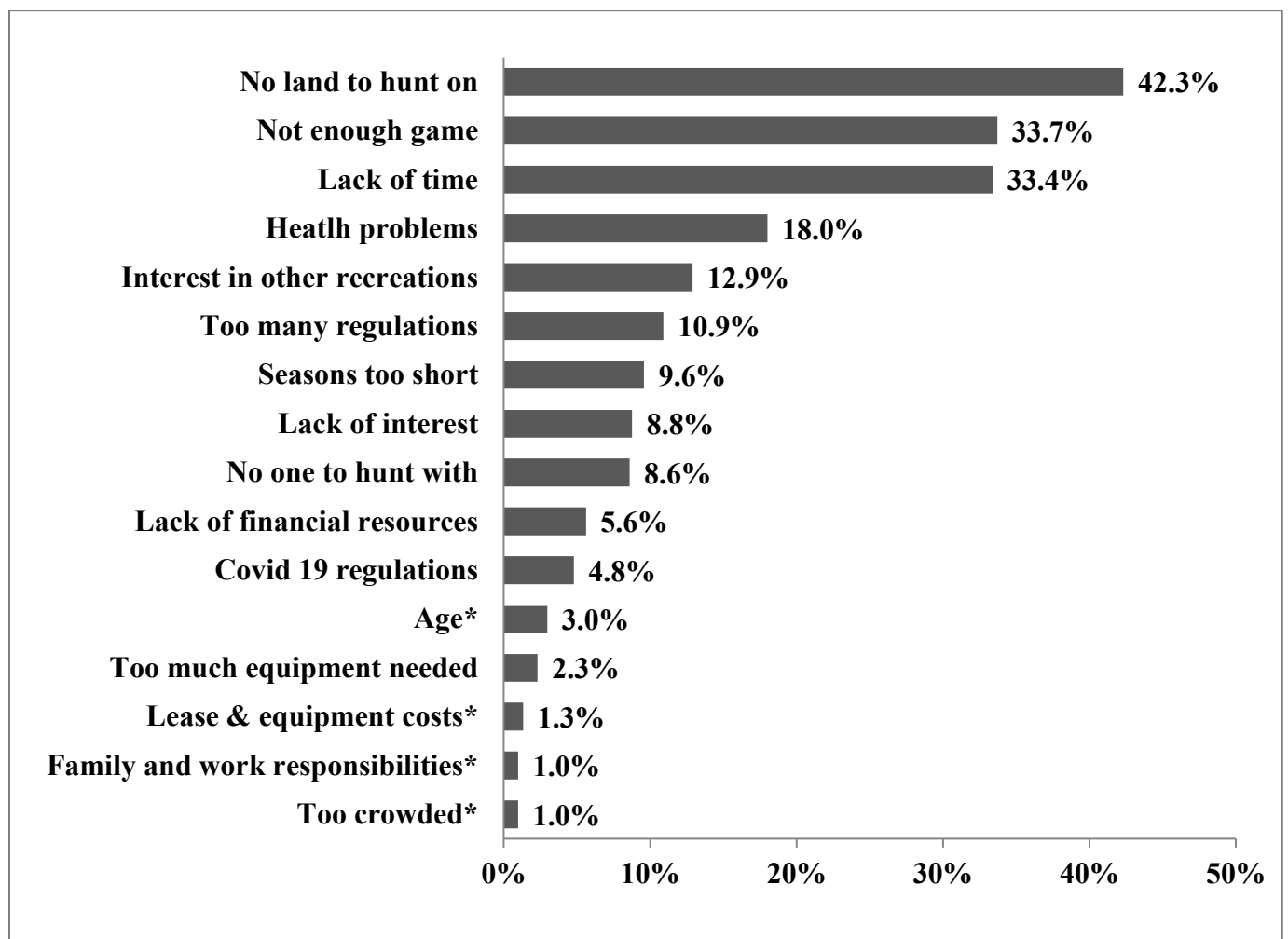


Figure 74. Reasons for decreased hunting effort ( $n = 605$ ).

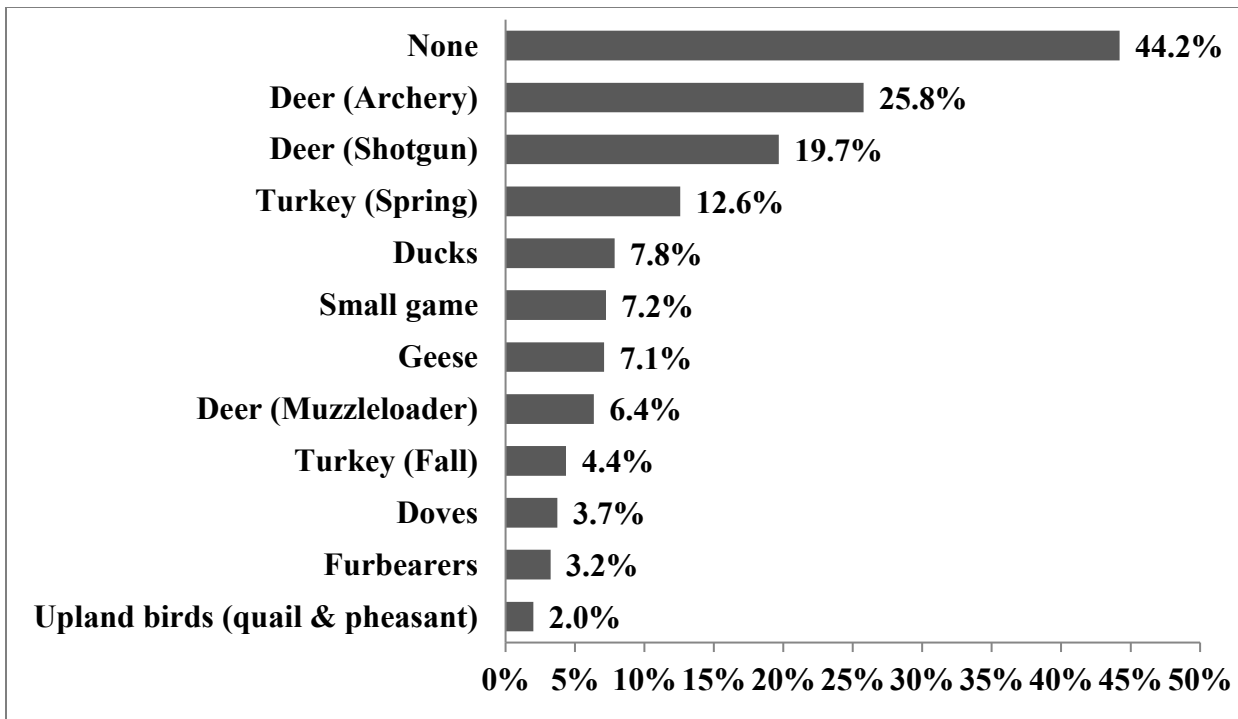


Figure 75. Types of game hunted more now than five years ago ( $n = 803$ ).

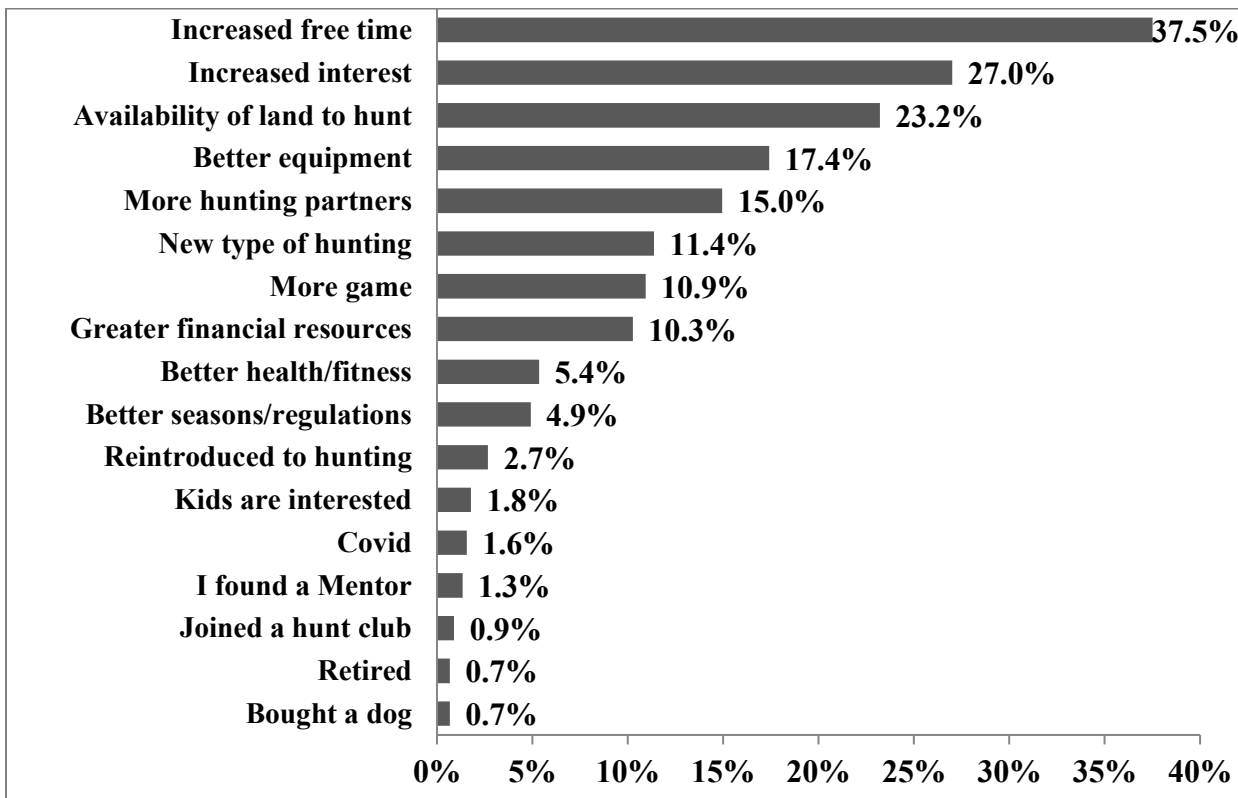


Figure 76. Reasons for increased hunting effort ( $n = 448$ ).

Respondents were asked what they felt was the single greatest problem contributing to the decline in hunting. “Not enough land” was the top response (24%), followed by “declining game species” (17%), and “too many hunters on public land” (13%) (Figure 77).

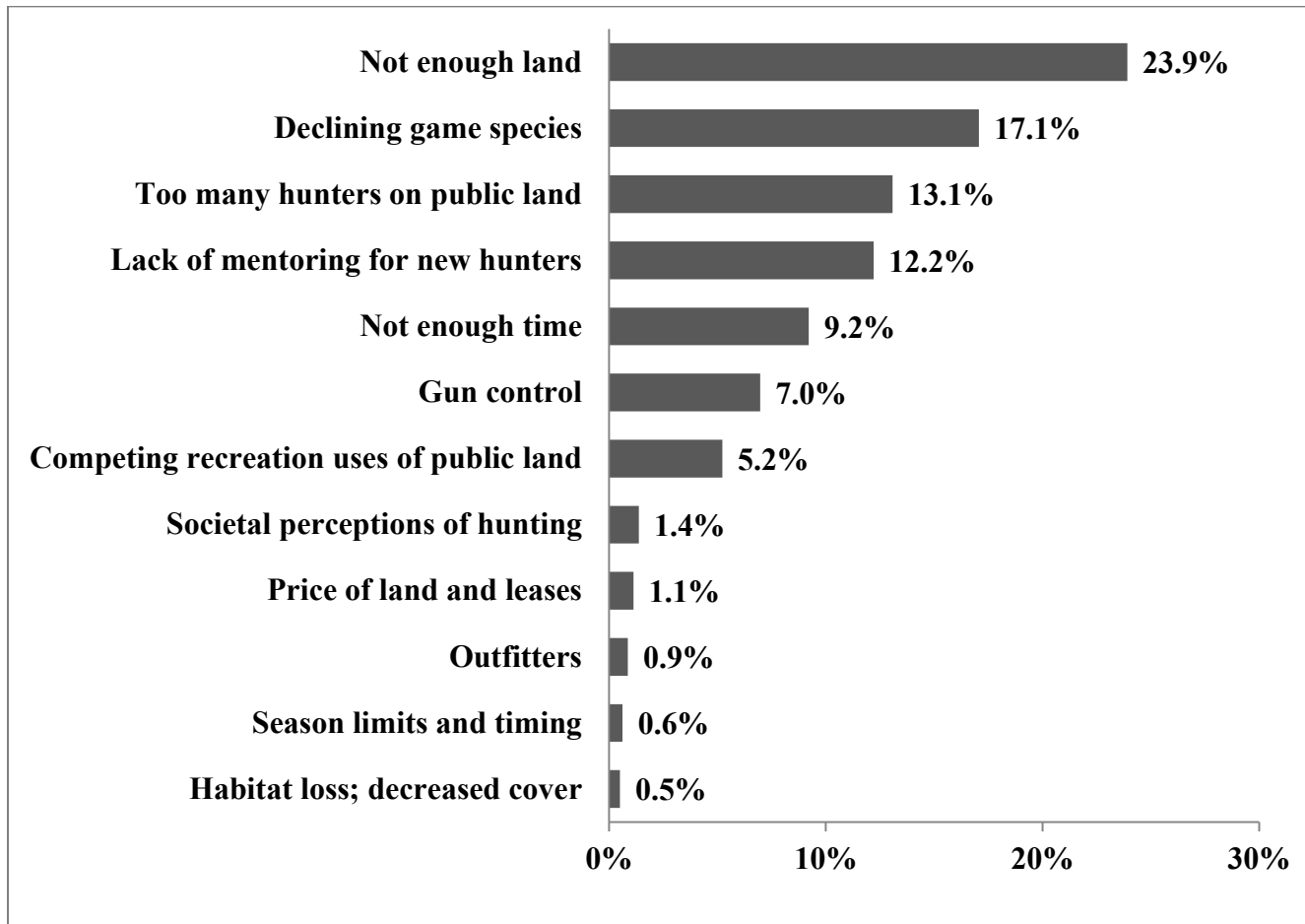


Figure 77. What respondents feel is the single greatest problem that contributes to the decline in hunting ( $n = 803$ ).

Eighty percent of respondents have paid a property owner to hunt private land in Illinois (Figure 78). Over half (68%) of respondents reported that they have been denied access for hunting private land in Illinois (Figure 79). Respondents were asked how often they were denied access, using a 7-point scale. The scale was reduced to a 3-point scale, with respondents getting denied hunting access

infrequently, half the time, or frequently. Eighteen percent of respondents have been denied access infrequently, 22% have been denied access half the time, and 60% have been denied access frequently ( $n=546$ ). Some of the reasons why recreationists believed they were denied permission include “other hunters had permission” (61%), “liability concerns” (57%), “previous bad experience with hunters” (46%), and “no one was allowed to hunt the property” (44%) (Figure 80).

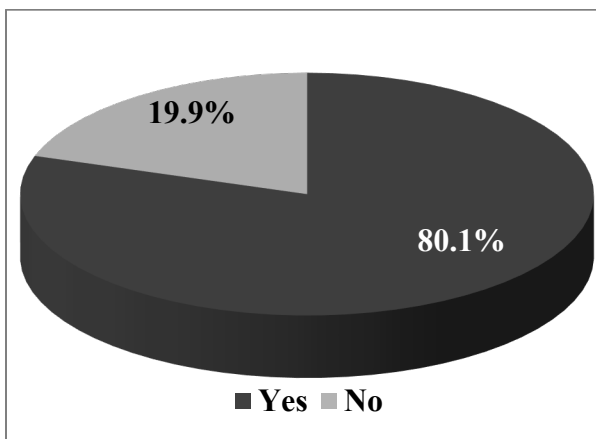


Figure 78. Percentage of respondents who have ever paid a property owner to hunt private land in Illinois ( $n = 803$ ).

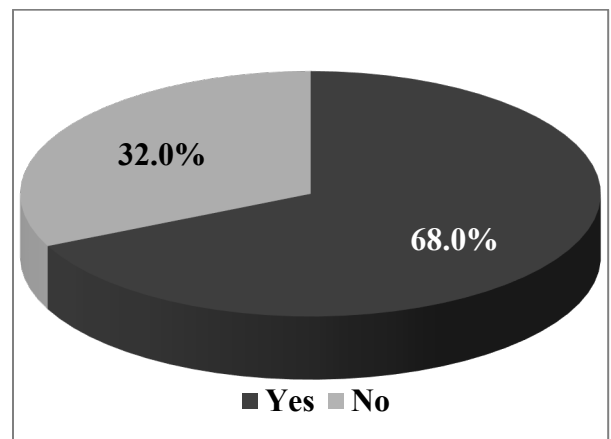


Figure 79. Percentage of respondents who have ever been denied access for hunting private land in Illinois ( $n = 803$ ).

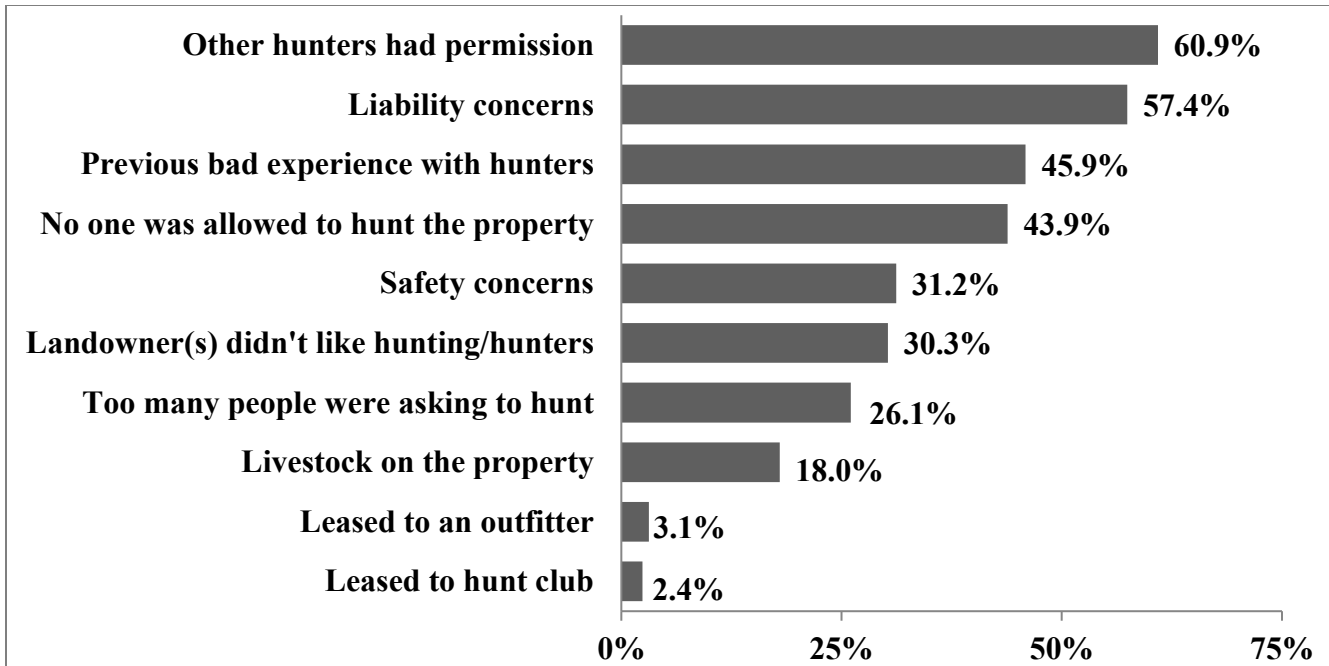


Figure 80. Why recreationists believe they were denied permission to hunt private land ( $n = 545$ ). (Percentages >100 because respondents selected all that applied.)

Approximately, 20% of hunters had taken a youth (less than 18 years old turkey hunting during an Illinois youth turkey hunt (Figure 81). More than half (61%) of the respondents moderately or extremely supported allowing youth turkey hunters to hunt during all 5 regular spring turkey seasons until the youth hunter was able to harvest a turkey with their youth turkey permit; twenty-seven percent of hunters were slightly or somewhat supportive, and 12% did not support this at all (Figure 82).



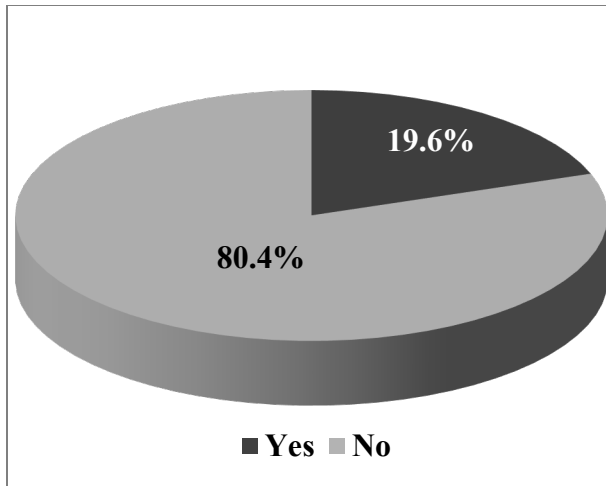


Figure 81. Percentage of respondents who have ever taken a youth turkey hunting during an Illinois Youth Turkey Hunt ( $n = 803$ ).

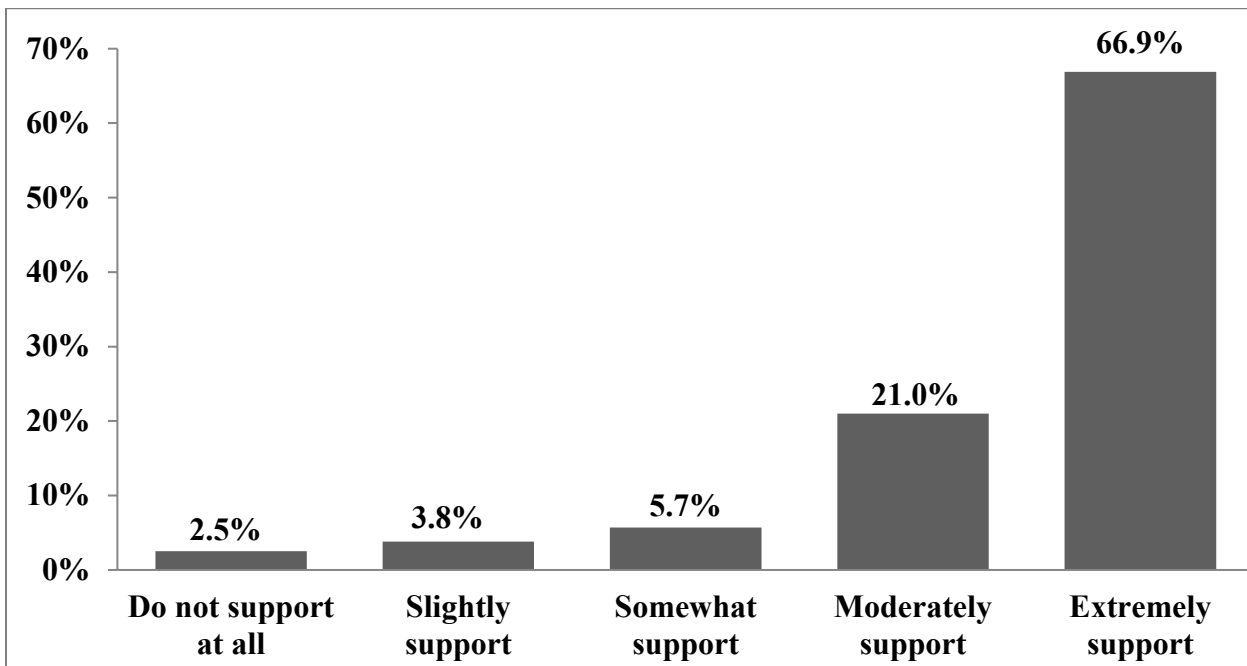


Figure 82. Support of allowing youth turkey hunters to hunt during all 5 regular spring turkey seasons until the youth hunter is able to harvest a turkey with their youth turkey permit ( $n = 157$ ).

Forty-four percent of recreationists have friends or family who would be interested in attending if IDNR had a mentored hunting program for youth and beginning hunters. Twenty-seven percent knew a female who had expressed interest in hunting but was uncomfortable trying it on their own. Eleven percent of recreationists indicated that they were very or extremely interested in participating in a mentor program for new hunters, whereas 17% were somewhat interested, and 71% were not at all or slightly interested (Table 32). A third were very or extremely interested in Illinois offering a mentor program for new/beginner hunters whereas 71.4% were not at all or slightly interested in becoming a mentor.

Table 32. Interest level in the following actions regarding a mentor program for IRAP.

	Not At All Interested (%)	Slightly Interested (%)	Somewhat Interested (%)	Very Interested (%)	Extremely Interested (%)	Mean <sup>a</sup> (S.D.)
IDNR offering a mentored hunting program for youth.	22.7	17.7	30.3	16.8	12.4	2.79 (1.31)
IDNR offering a mentored hunting program for new/beginning hunters.	22.3	13.3	31.4	19.1	13.9	2.89 (1.33)
Enroll in a mentor program as a new hunter.	59.3	12.1	17.3	6.4	4.9	1.85 (1.20)
Participating in a mentor program as a mentor	50.5	17.5	19.2	8.2	4.6	1.99 (1.20)
Encouraging friends to enroll as new hunters in a mentor program	28.8	15.2	28.4	18.1	9.5	2.64 (1.32)
Encouraging friends to participate as a mentor	33.6	17.7	27.2	14.8	6.7	2.43 (1.27)

<sup>a</sup>1=Not at all interested, 5=Extremely interested

## Discussion

This study of statewide hunters allows for a better understanding of awareness of and support for IRAP. Recreationists in Illinois were primarily involved in fishing and hunting and ranked these as the most important activities to them. They usually recreated on private land that was owned by someone else or their own private land and 80% found it difficult to gain access to private land. Almost 90% agreed that landowners have become less willing to grant permission to hunt on private land. Most respondents indicated that they generally preferred to access private land over public land for recreation, and two-thirds agreed to some extent that some type of hunter recreation program was needed to improve access to private land.

A minority of survey respondents (24%) were aware of IRAP before receiving the questionnaire, and among those only 7% had ever applied to IRAP. This finding suggests a need for increasing awareness of the program. A majority of those who were aware of IRAP became familiar with it through the IDNR website or a friend. This low awareness may reflect the limited geographic extent of the program to date, combined with the proportion of hunters currently have access to private land.

Most, 88%, were moderately or extremely supportive of the program, indicative that support for the program exists on a statewide basis. About a third were likely to participate in IRAP, and archery deer and sport fishing were the preferred activities. Forty-two percent indicated their decreased hunting effort was due to “no land to hunt on” and 24% felt “not enough land” was single greatest problem contributing to the decline of hunting. Sixty-eight percent of hunters reported that they have been denied hunting access on private land, and 80% said that they have paid property owners to hunt private land. These findings are consistent with results of other studies in Illinois that point to lack of access as the leading cause of hunter attrition in the state (Miller and Vaske 2003).

Survey respondents generally were supportive of expanding opportunities offered by IRAP, especially youth archery deer and youth waterfowl hunting and mentor programs, though they themselves were not eager to participate. Archery deer hunting, sport fishing, and small game hunting were among the top IRAP activities in which respondents were most interested. Findings suggest IRAP could be a means to increase hunter participation, as most respondents indicated that they would hunt more if they participated in IRAP. The most common reasons for why participation in IRAP was unlikely were having access to their own property for hunting and a lack of free time. A lack of free time is consistent with other studies conducted in Illinois (Miller et al. 2001, Alessi et al. 2013). Lack of time can be attributed to not only time for actual participation, but associated travel time to access sites and time required to locate lands open to hunting. Most hunters traveled less than 25% to where they hunt, providing access to private lands within an acceptable range of hunters' homes will add to the program's appeal. In conclusion, findings of this study suggest support for IRAP among hunters in Illinois.

## 4. Illinois Statewide Landowner Survey

### Results

Of the 2,494 Illinois landowners in our initial mailing, 90 were removed as undeliverable for a sample of 2,404. We received 383 usable questionnaires, resulting in a 16% response rate.

#### Landowner Profile

Approximately four-fifths (86.4%) of respondents were male (Figure 83) and averaged 66 years of age. Almost half (46.2%) had a bachelor's degree or higher, 32.0% had a high school diploma or GED, and 21.2% had an associate degree or attended technical school. Forty-four percent of respondents were the sole decision-maker, whereas 37.7% shared private property decision making with their spouse (Figure 84).

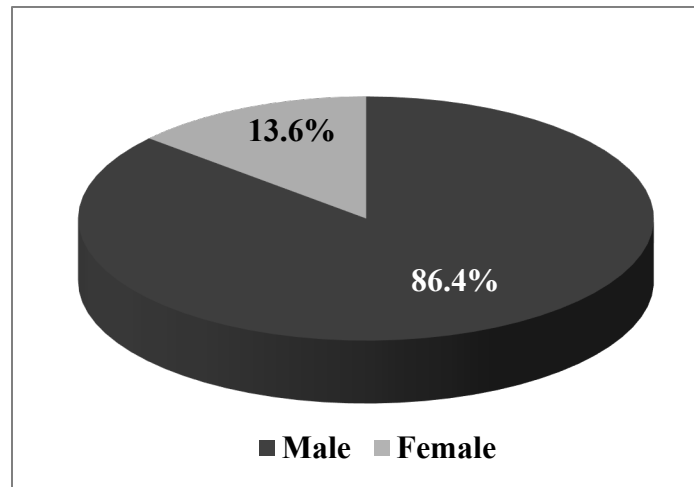


Figure 83. Gender distribution of respondents ( $n = 386$ ).

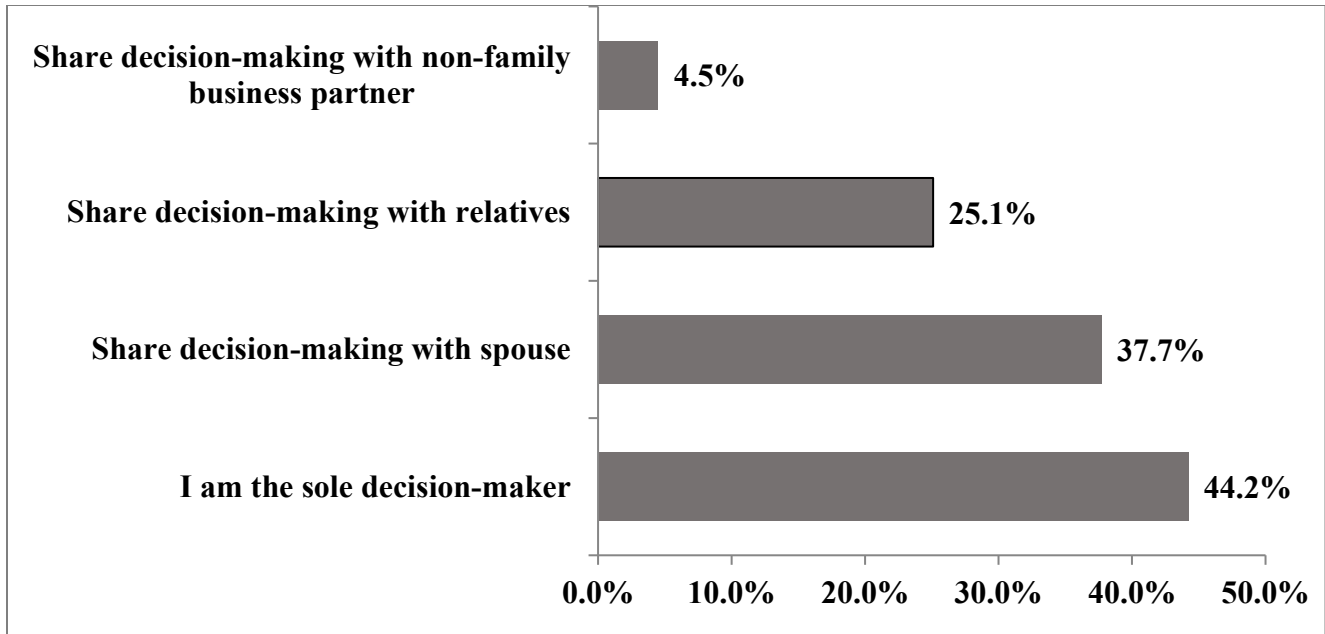


Figure 84. The primary decision maker on the private property owned ( $n = 382$ ).

Almost half (42.9%) of landowners indicated that 10% or less of their gross household income came from their private land, whereas 17.4% of respondents reported 76%-100% of their income came from their private land (Figure 85). The average acres owned by respondents was  $321 \pm 498$  acres ( $n=383$ ) and the average number of parcels owned was  $4 \pm 5$ . Eight percent of participants owned land in Jo Daviess County, 7% in Madison, and 7% in Monroe (Table 33). Most respondents' private land was reported as agricultural fields (86%), followed by forest (72%) and pasture (35%) (Figure 86). Thirty-eight percent reported that farming was their primary source of income and 27% had livestock on their property (Figures 87 & 88).

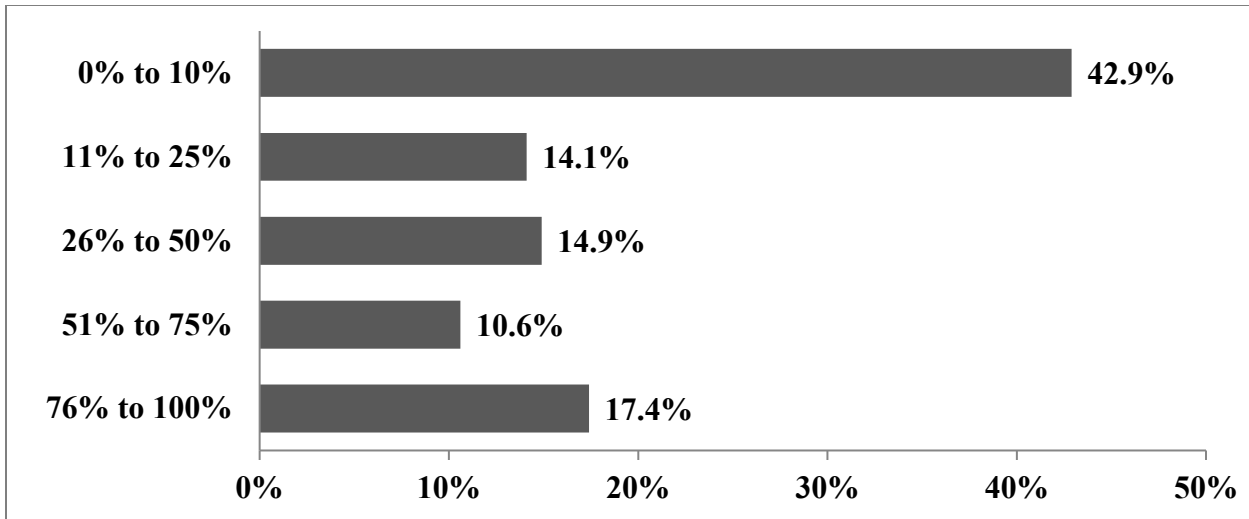


Figure 85. Approximate percentage of total net household income that comes from owned private property ( $n = 368$ ).

Table 33. Distribution of Illinois counties in which participants currently own land ( $n = 383$ ).

County	<i>n</i>	County	<i>n</i>	County	<i>n</i>	County	<i>n</i>
Adams	4	Fulton	6	Lee	5	Randolph	5
Bond	2	Gallatin	1	Livingston	2	Richland	1
Boone	2	Greene	5	Macon	1	Rock Island	12
Brown	4	Grundy	8	Macoupin	6	Schuyler	5
Bureau	18	Hamilton	2	Madison	27	Shelby	3
Calhoun	5	Hancock	5	Marion	4	St. Clair	27
Carroll	20	Hardin	1	Marshall	15	Stark	3
Cass	1	Henry	17	McDonough	2	Stephenson	14
Clark	1	Jackson	1	McHenry	9	Tazewell	1
Clinton	2	Jefferson	1	Menard	1	Union	2
Coles	1	Jersey	23	Mercer	18	Warren	1
Cook	3	Jo Daviess	30	Monroe	24	Washington	3
Crawford	1	Johnson	1	Montgomery	3	Wayne	1
De Kalb	11	Kane	7	Ogle	17	Whiteside	13
Douglas	1	Kankakee	3	Peoria	3	Will	8
Edwards	1	Kendall	5	Perry	7	Williamson	1
Effingham	1	Knox	3	Piatt	1	Winnebago	4
Fayette	4	Lake	1	Pike	6		
Franklin	1	LaSalle	22	Putnam	10		

Counties not listed did not have any participants who owned property in that county.

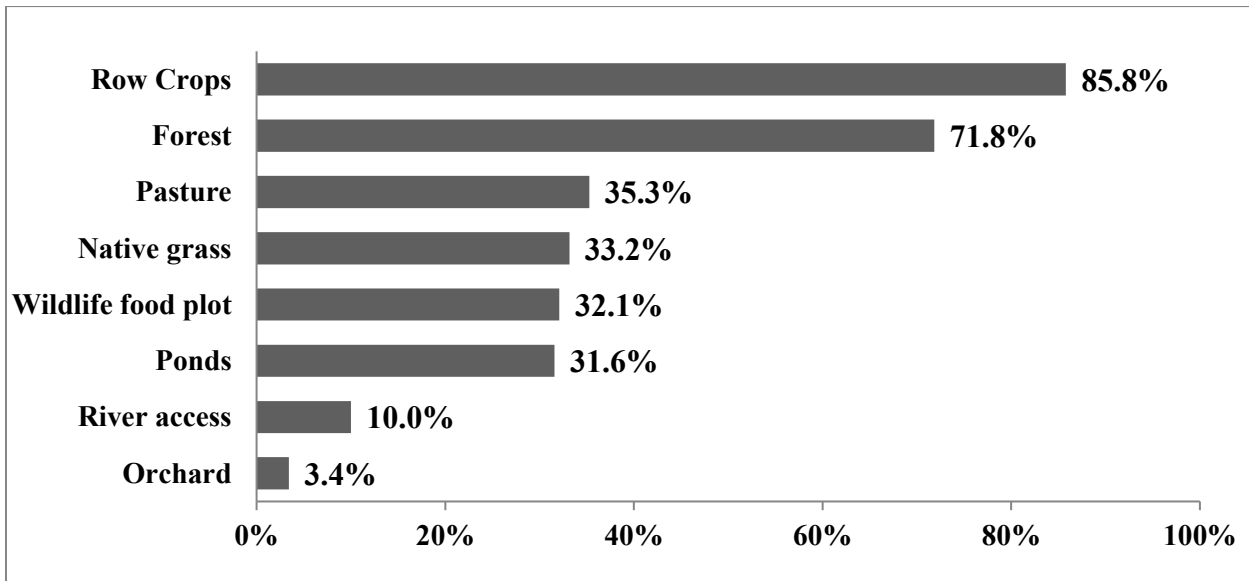


Figure 86. Types of land-cover that best describes private property ( $n = 400$ ).  
(Percentages >100 because respondents selected all that applied.)

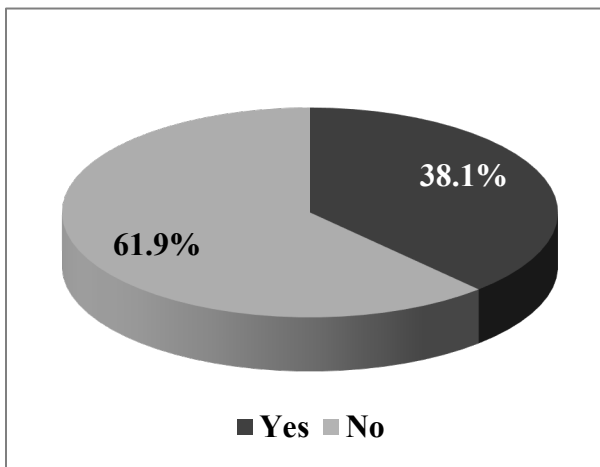


Table 87. Percentage of respondents who reported farming is their primary source of income ( $n = 383$ ).

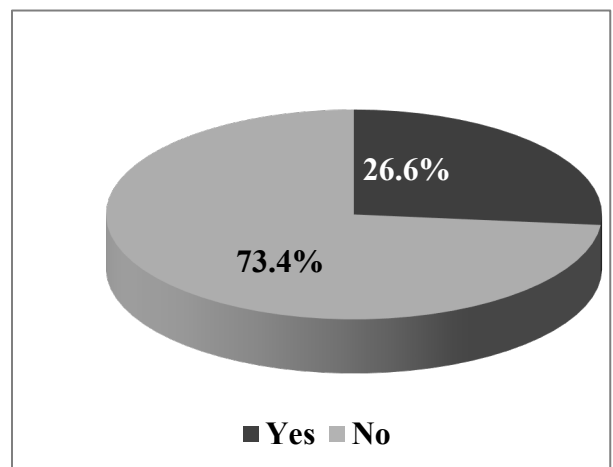


Figure 88. Percentage of respondents who have livestock on their property ( $n = 383$ ).



In terms of conservation practices performed by respondents, 71% currently manage their land using at least one (Figure 89). The most common practices included grassed waterways (83%), wildlife food plots (40.3%), native grass plantings (36.8%), cover crops (27%), and tree plantings (27%) (Figure 90).

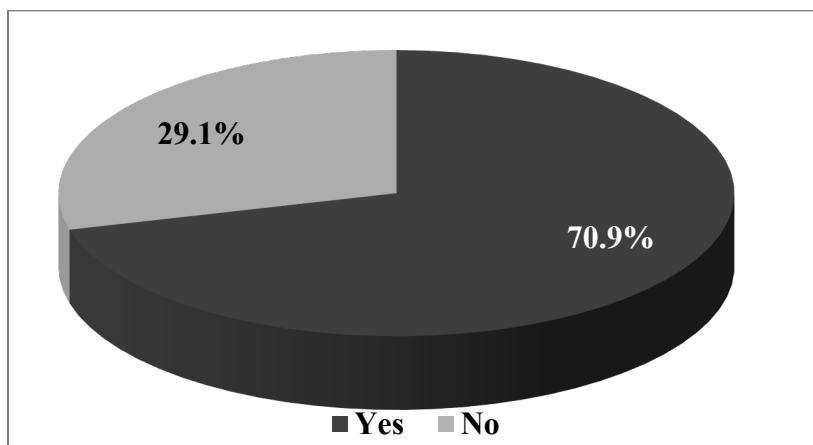


Figure 89. Percentage of respondents who perform any conservation management practices on their property ( $n = 383$ ).

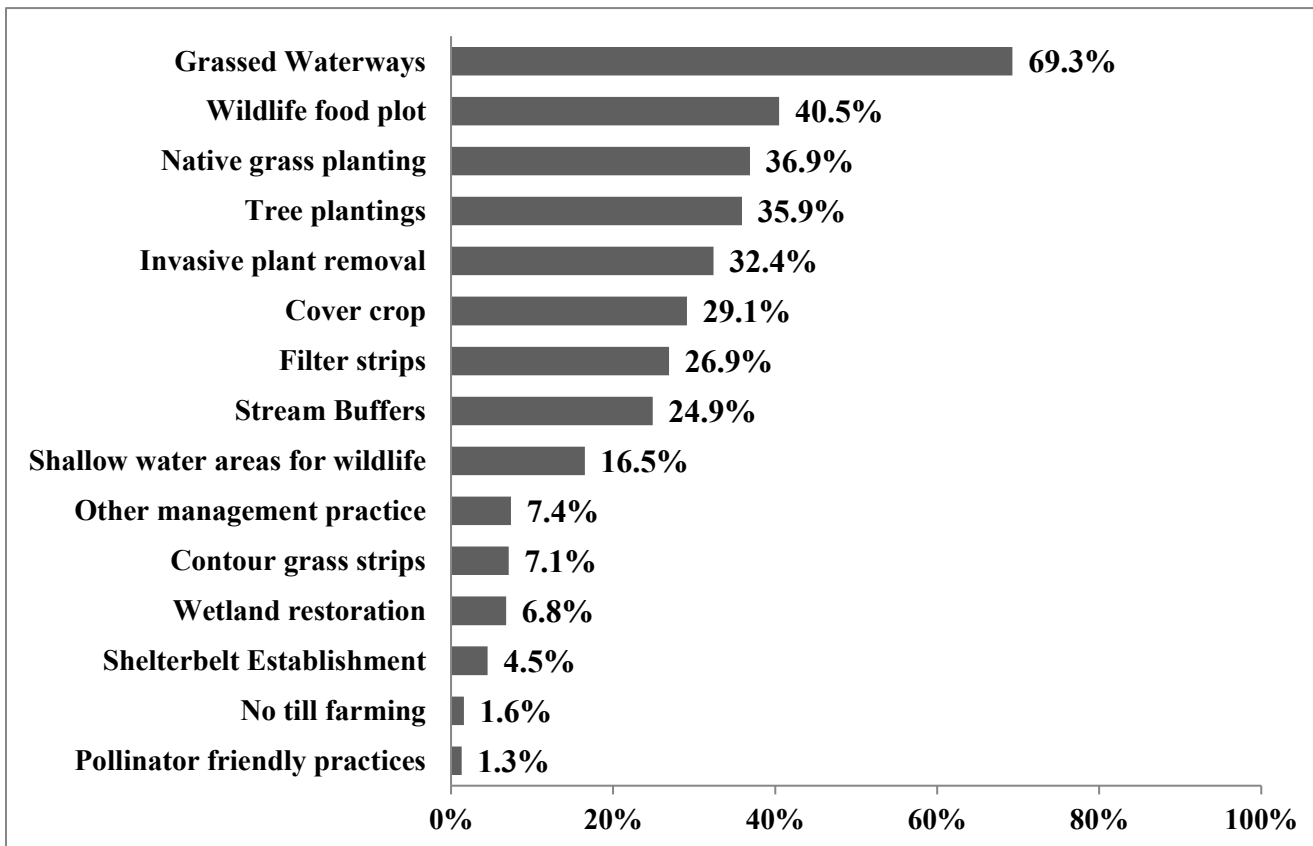


Figure 90. Conservation practices performed by respondents ( $n = 272$ ).

Forty-four percent of respondents reported that they currently participated in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) (Table 34). Other unlisted programs followed by Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) were the next highest for respondent participation (7% and 5%, respectively).

Table 34. Respondent participation in various USDA and Illinois state conservation programs, in order of participation.

	Never participated (%)	Participated in the past, but not now (%)	Currently participate, but will not renew (%)	Currently participate and will renew (%)
CRP (Conservation Reserve Program)	40.5	11.7	3.9	43.9
Other Conservation Program	85.6	5.0	0.5	8.9
CREP (Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program)	89.6	2.6	1.0	6.8
CSP (Conservation Stewardship Program)	89.6	3.9	1.0	5.5
FWP (Farmable Wetlands Program)	96.6	0.3	0.3	2.9
ACEP (Agricultural Conservation Easement Program)	96.6	1.3	0.3	1.8
WRP (Wetland Reserve Program)	96.9	1.3	0.0	1.8
SAFE (State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement)	96.6	1.3	0.8	1.3
SWPP (Source Water Protection Program)	98.7	1.0	0.0	0.3

When asked if they would continue participating in a conservation program if they were not receiving payment, 49.7% of respondents reported “probably yes” or “definitely yes” (Figure 91).

Twenty-four percent were not sure whether or not they would continue to engage in the conservation practices, and 26.2% said they would “probably not” or “definitely not” continue.

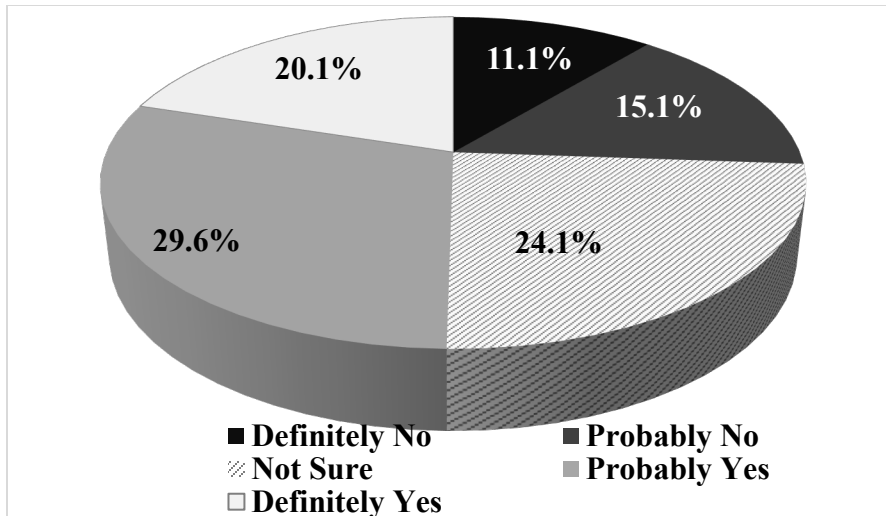


Figure 91. Percentage of respondents who would continue to engage in conservation practices if they did not receive payment ( $n = 199$ ).

Landowners had a total 6,009 acres enrolled in CRP, 4,860 acres in CSP, and 420 acres in CREP. Landowners were asked to provide the name of the enrolled program but several included conservation practices. The most mentioned were tree plantings, grassed waterways, and pollinator plantings (Table 35).

Table 35. Conservation programs participation and total acres currently enrolled ( $n = 195$ ).

Programs & practices	Number of landowners	Total acres enrolled	Mean acres enrolled
CRP (Conservation Reserve Program)	163	6,009	37
CSP (Conservation Stewardship Program)	15	4,860	324
CREP (Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program)	12	420	35
WRP (Wetland Reserve Program)	4	94	24
SAFE (State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement)	4	355	89
Other conservation programs	3	172	57
FWP (Farmable Wetlands Program)	3	85	28
EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentives Program)	2	100	50
ACEP (Agricultural Conservation Easement Program)	2	85	43
IRAP	1	2,050	2,050
Tree plantings; pine windbreak; trees	7	137	20
Waterways; grassed waterways	6	28	5
Pollinator plots; pollinator plantings; pollinator habitat	5	50	10
Native grass; wildlife grass; native plantings	5	60	12
Filter strips	4	45	11
Forestry; forestry conservation	3	175	58
Cover crop	2	107	54
Multiple programs	1	800	800
Buffers	1	15	15
Farm	1	130	130

Improving the quality of habitat on their land for game species was the most important aspect of conservation to landowners (65.9%) followed by protecting native plant species on my land (Table 36). Whereas 42.0% felt that increasing the amount of habitat on their for non-game species was neither unimportant or important. When asked about interest in conservation programs, most landowners (59.0%) were interested in improving habitat conditions on their property to benefit wildlife (Table 37). Though less than a third (32.4%) were interested in having a habitat management plan implemented on their property.

Table 36. Importance of habitat conservation to landowners ( $n = 126$ ).

	Extremely Unimportant (%)	Unimportant (%)	Neither (%)	Important (%)	Extremely Important (%)	Mean <sup>a</sup> (S.D.)
Protecting native plant species on my land	4.1	8.2	33.1	40.7	13.9	3.52 (0.97)
Preserving native plant species on my land	3.8	9.8	32.2	40.7	13.4	3.50 (0.97)
Restoring native habitats on my land	3.6	11.9	35.6	35.9	13.0	3.43 (0.98)
Improving the quality of habitat on my land for game species	3.3	7.4	23.4	38.7	27.2	3.79 (1.03)
Improving quality of habitat on my land for protect non-game species	4.1	9.9	34.3	35.2	16.5	3.50 (1.01)
Increasing the amount habit on my land for game species	4.7	10.7	33.2	31.0	20.5	3.52 (1.08)
Increasing the amount of habitat on my land for non-game species	5.8	12.9	42.0	28.0	11.3	3.26 (1.01)

<sup>a</sup>1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree

Table 37. Landowners level of interest in aspects of conservation program enrollment.

	Extremely Uninterested (%)	Uninterested (%)	Neither (%)	Interested (%)	Extremely Interested (%)	Mean <sup>a</sup> (S.D.)
Having a habitat management plan implemented on your property.	12.5	24.0	31.1	25.1	7.4	2.91 (1.13)
Enrolling your property into a conservation management program(s).	11.0	25.8	28.8	27.7	6.8	2.94 (1.12)
Improving habitat conditions on your property to benefit wildlife.	5.5	12.3	23.2	41.5	17.5	3.53 (1.08)
Receiving financial incentives for conservation management practices performed on your property.	8.7	12.0	23.6	37.2	18.5	3.45 (1.18)

<sup>a</sup>1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree

### **Private Land Hunting in Illinois**

Twenty percent of landowners agreed that it was easy to find places to hunt or recreate in Illinois, 62.1% disagreed, and 27.8% neither agreed nor disagreed (Table 38). Slightly more than 70% of respondents were in agreement that landowners have become less willing to grant permission to access their land, whereas almost 3.7% disagreed. Approximately 25% of respondents agreed that some type of hunter/recreation program was needed to improve access to private land, whereas 48% disagreed, and 27% neither agreed nor disagreed (Table 38).

Table 38. Landowners' level of agreement with statements regarding land access. (*n* = 374).

	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neither (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Mean <sup>a</sup> (S.D.)
It is easy to find places to hunt/recreate in Illinois	11.5	40.6	27.8	17.1	2.9	2.59 (1.00)
It is difficult to gain access to private properties for recreating in Illinois	1.9	6.4	25.6	52.5	13.6	3.7 (0.85)
Landowners have become less willing to grant permission to recreate on private land	1.3	2.4	23.4	51.3	21.5	3.89 (0.81)
It is easy to establish and maintain private landowner contacts in Illinois	8.2	21.5	51.1	16.6	2.7	2.84 (0.89)
Some type of hunter/recreation program is needed to improve access to private land in Illinois	9.6	17.1	48.1	19.3	5.9	2.95 (0.99)

<sup>a</sup>1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree

More than a third of respondents were aware that landowners who provided hunters free access to their property have their liability reduced under Illinois law (Figure 92). Slightly more than half reported carrying an umbrella liability insurance coverage on their property, whereas 21.4% did not; the remaining 28% of respondents indicated that they did not allow others to recreate on their property (Figure 93).



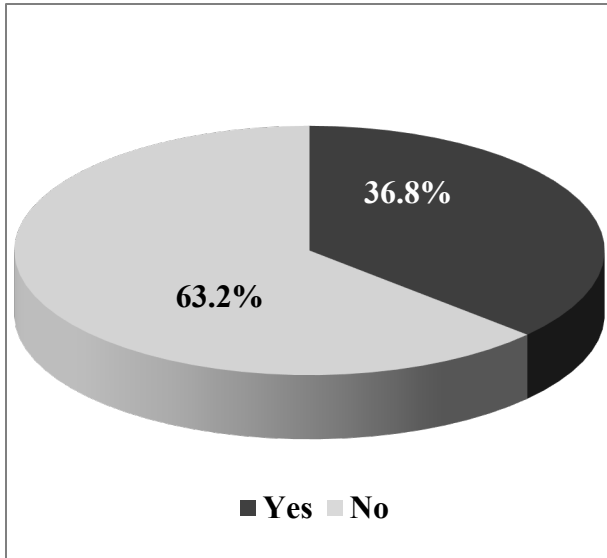


Figure 92. Percentage of respondents who are aware that landowners who provide hunters free access to their property have their liability reduced under Illinois law ( $n = 383$ ).

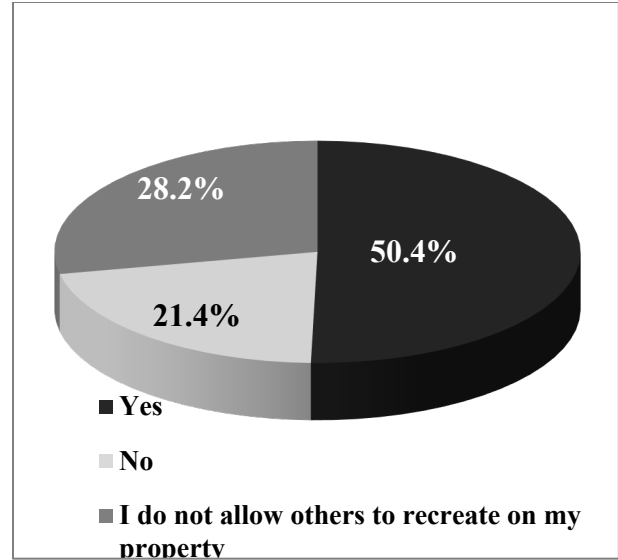


Figure 93. Landowners who currently carry an umbrella liability insurance coverage on their property ( $n = 374$ ).

More than four fifths (86%) of landowners have denied hunters asking for permission to hunt on their property (Figure 94). The most common reasons why landowners denied access were “I keep it for myself, family, and friends” (69%), “Liability” (44%), and “Hunters were inconsiderate of my land” (31%) (Figure 95). Common write ins concerned knowing who was hunting their property, possible conflict with neighbors, poaching/trespassing in the past. Thirty-one percent of respondents reported that they denied hunting access never to infrequently, 16% denied access frequently, and 10% denied access always (Figure 96).

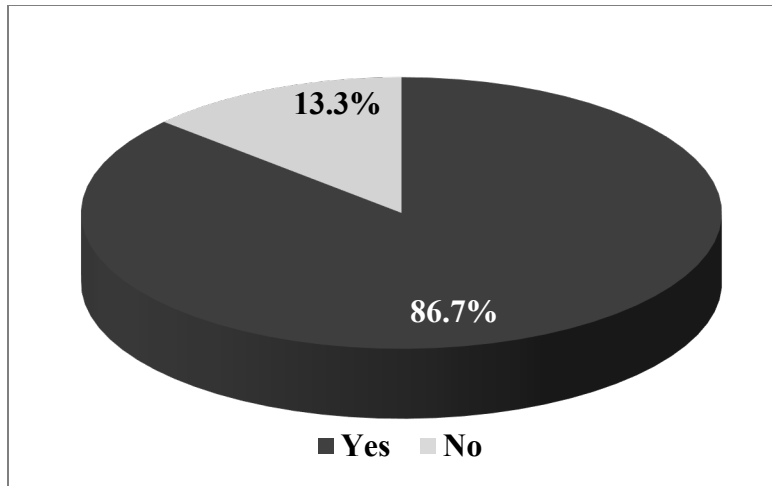


Figure 94. Percentage of respondents who have ever denied access to hunters asking for permission to hunt their property ( $n = 383$ ).

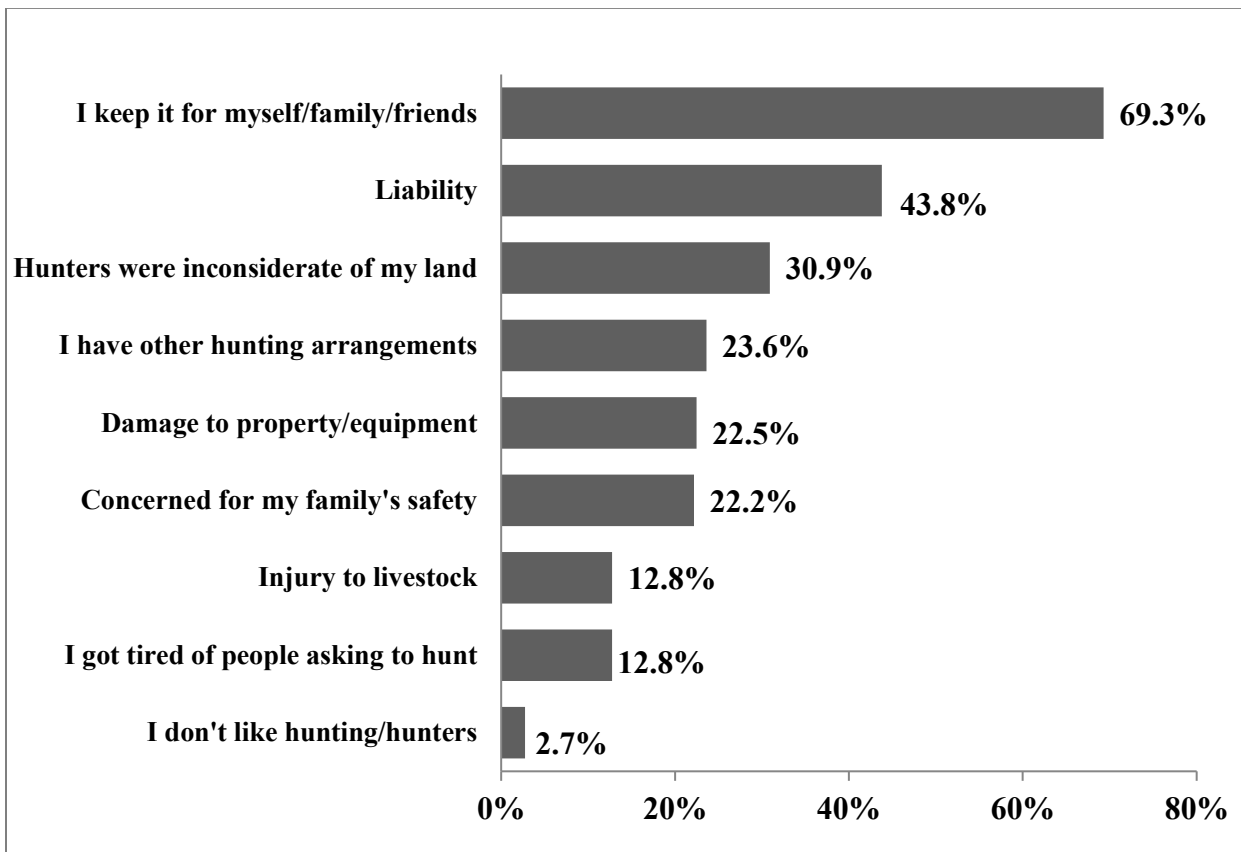


Figure 95. Why landowners denied hunters permission to hunt on their land ( $n = 329$ ). (Percentages >100 because respondents selected all that applied.)

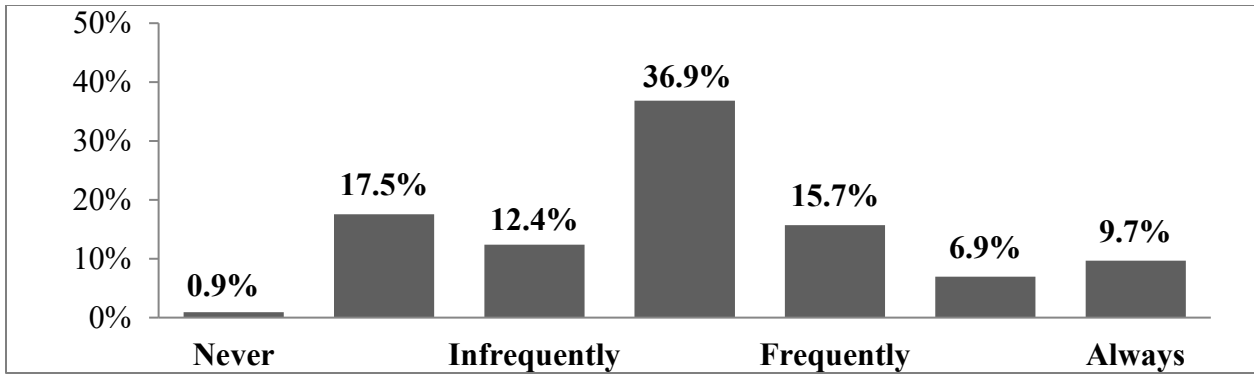


Figure 96. Frequency with which landowners denied hunters access to their property ( $n = 331$ ).

Seventy-two percent of landowners currently allow hunting on their property, 15% used to but not anymore, and 13% did not allow hunting (Figure 97). The majority (68.9%) of those who allowed hunting on their property allowed extended family, friends, and neighbors followed by themselves and immediate family (62.8%) (Figure 98). Over half (58%) of respondents considered removing nuisance wildlife a benefit of having hunters on their property (Figure 99). Another commonly reported benefit of allowing hunters on their property included discouraging trespassers (30.9%). Three-quarters (79%) of respondents had between 1-5 people hunt on their property each year (Figure 100).

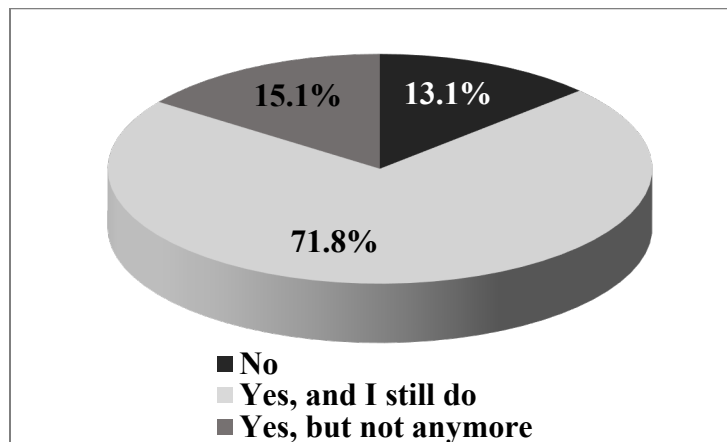


Figure 97. Percentage of landowners who have ever allowed hunting on their property ( $n = 383$ ).

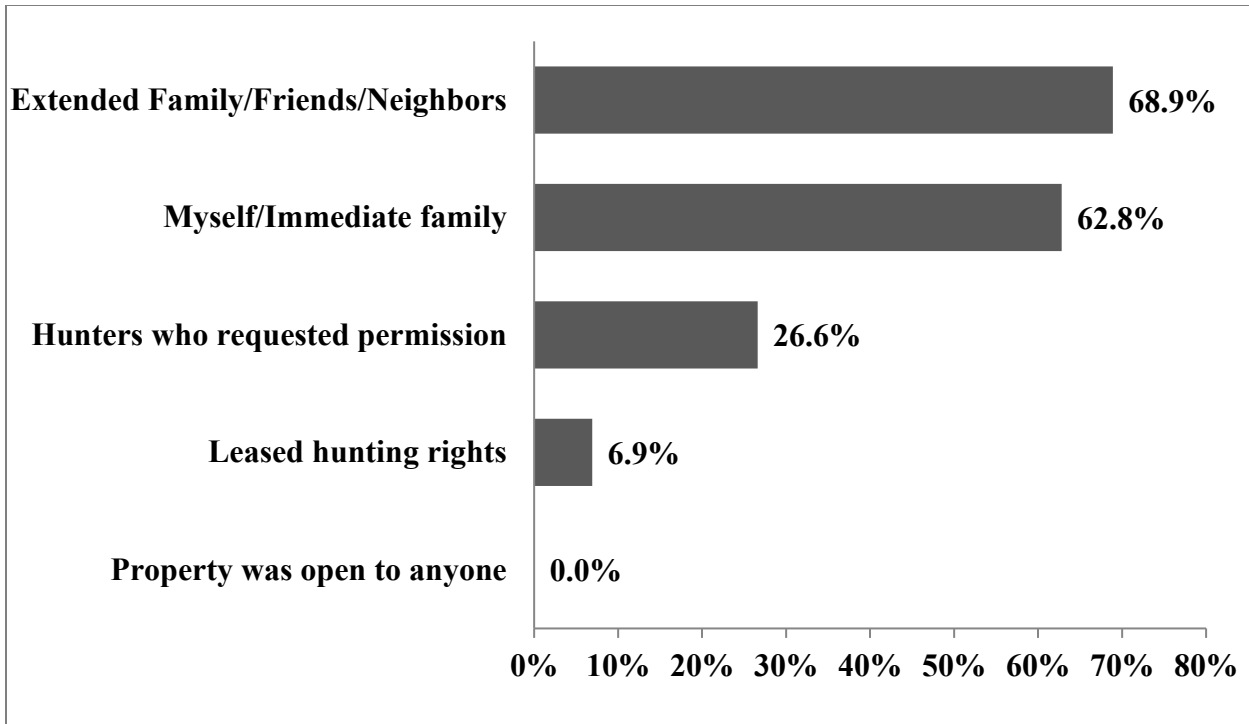


Figure 98. Types of people allowed to hunt on property ( $n = 331$ ).  
 (Percentages are greater than 100 because respondents selected all that applied.)

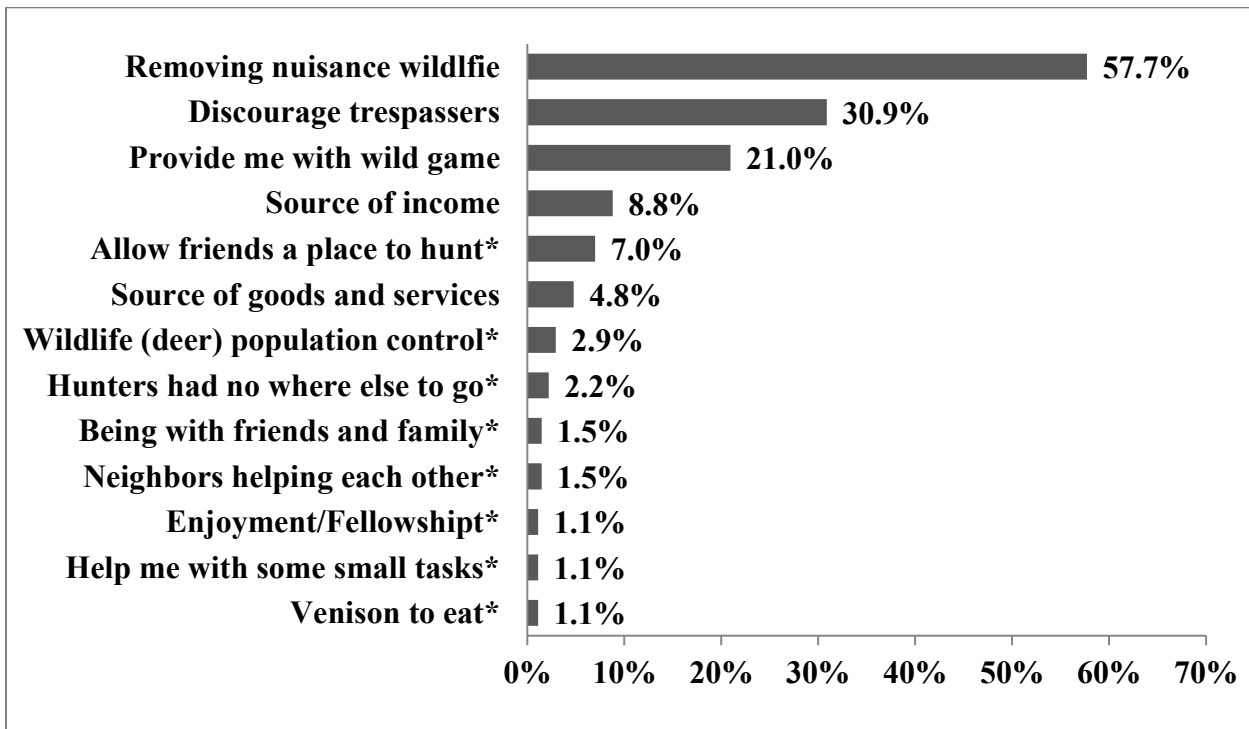


Figure 99. What respondents consider to be the benefits of having hunters on their property ( $n = 319$ ).  
 (Percentages >100 because respondents selected all that applied.) \* denotes a written in response.

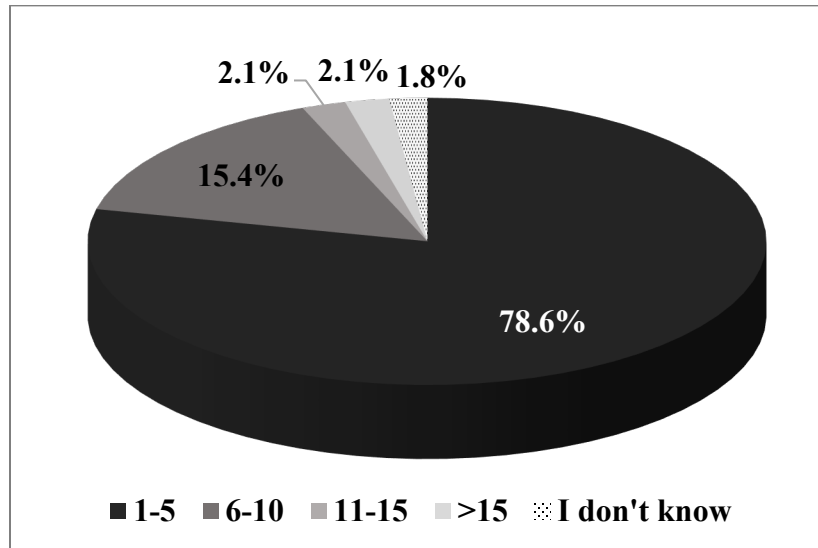


Figure 100. The number of people allowed to hunt on the respondents' property each year ( $n = 332$ ).

The species that was hunted most often on respondents' properties was deer (95%), followed by turkey (66%) and predators (59%) (Figure 101). The majority (94%) of respondents reported they never contacted a Conservation Officer with problems involving hunters who had permission to use their property (Figure 102). Whereas, when asked about problems involving hunters who did not have permission, 66% reported they never contacted a Conservation Officer about problems (Figure 102).

When asked about overall satisfaction of hunters who have hunted their property, 5.8% reported that they were extremely dissatisfied or dissatisfied, 77.75% were satisfied or extremely satisfied, and 16.5% were neither (Figure 103).

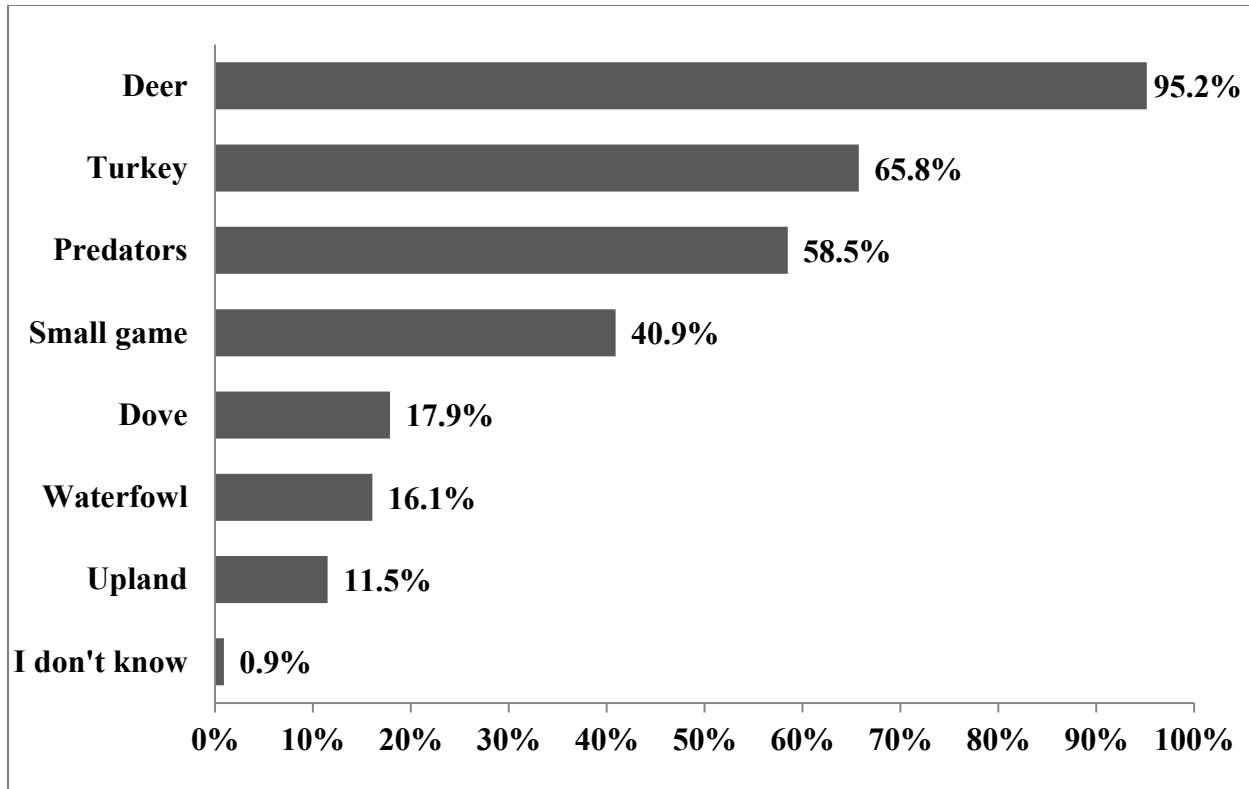


Figure 101. The type of game hunted on respondents' properties ( $n = 330$ ). (Percentages >100 because respondents selected all that applied.)

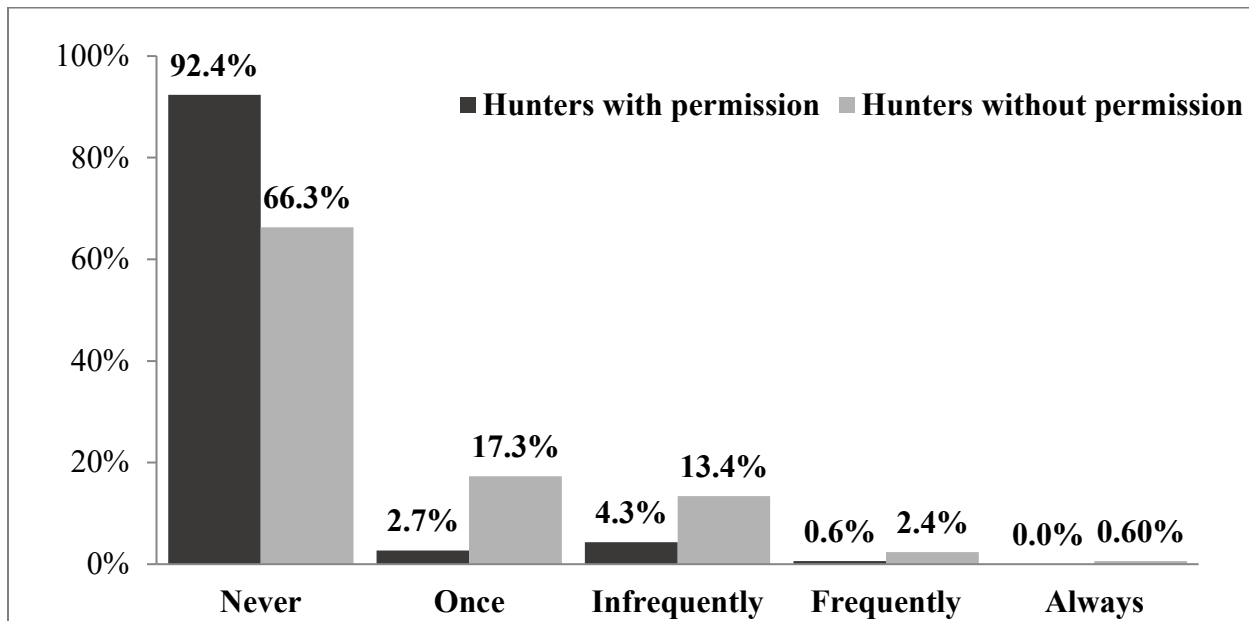


Figure 102. Frequency with which respondents needed to contact a Conservation Officer with problems on their property involving hunters ( $n = 329$ ).

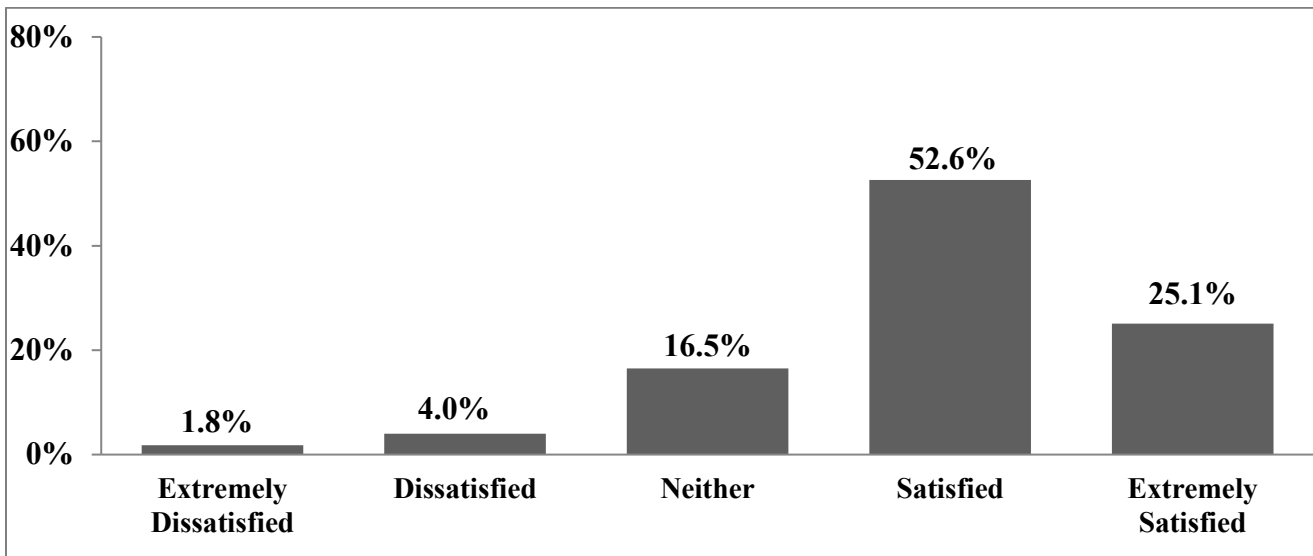


Figure 103. Satisfaction of respondents with the hunters who hunted their property ( $n = 327$ ).

### **IRAP Participation**

Before receiving the survey, 26% of respondents reported they were previously aware of IRAP (Figure 104). Ways in which respondents became aware of IRAP were through newspapers/magazines (40%), friends (31%), IDNR website (25%) or Pheasants Forever (18%) (Figure 105).

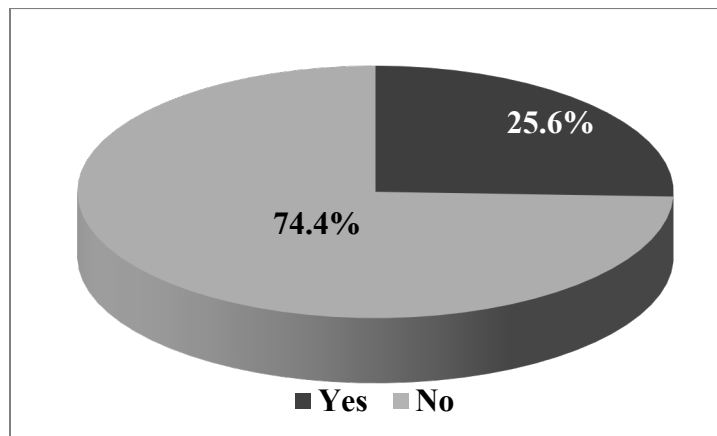


Figure 104. Percentage of respondents who were aware of IRAP before this survey ( $n = 383$ ).

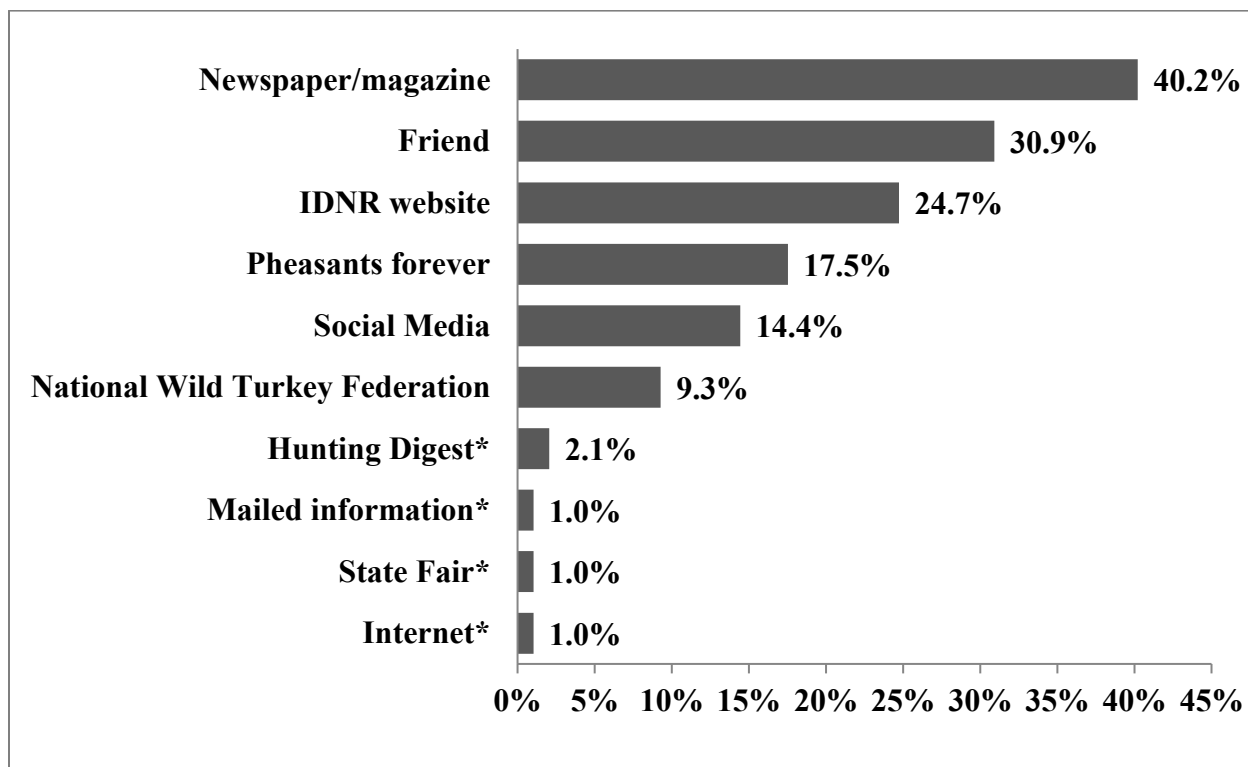


Figure 105. How respondents became aware of IRAP ( $n = 97$ ).

Eight-six percent of landowners were uninterested in providing outdoor recreational opportunities to the public on their property 68% were uninterested in having controlled recreational activities on their property (Table 39). Almost half of respondents (48%) were interested in having personal liability protection for activities performed on their property. Two thirds were uninterested in providing opportunities to new youth and adult hunters.



Table 39. Respondent interest in specific actions on their property (*n* = 374).

	Extremely Uninterested (%)	Uninterested (%)	Neither (%)	Interested (%)	Extremely Interested (%)	Mean <sup>a</sup> (S.D.)
Having controlled recreational activities on your property.	37.2	30.8	15.5	11.0	5.5	2.17 (1.20)
Providing outdoor recreational opportunities to the public on your property.	55.2	31.5	8.2	4.2	0.9	1.64 (0.87)
Providing hunting opportunities to new youth and adult hunters.	37.6	30.0	16.7	14.8	0.9	2.12 (1.10)
Having personal liability protection for activities performed on your property.	19.0	11.7	21.2	29.4	18.7	3.17 (1.38)

<sup>a</sup>1=Extremely Uninterested, 5=Extremely Interested

When asked about various statements regarding IRAP, the most popular response was “neither agree nor disagree” for all statements but one (Table 40). Fifty-one percent of respondents agreed that IRAP created new opportunities to hunt/recreate on private land whereas 6% disagreed. Whereas only 3% of landowners felt that IRAP was beneficial to them personally, 42% agreed that IRAP was beneficial to Illinois. One third felt that IRAP is needed to improve hunter/recreation access to private lands in Illinois.

Table 40. Level of agreement with statements regarding IRAP (*n* = 360).

	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neither (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Mean <sup>a</sup> (S.D.)
IRAP is needed to improve hunter/recreation access to private lands in IL.	8.7	8.9	48.0	28.5	6.0	3.14 (0.97)
IRAP is beneficial for IL.	6.2	4.9	46.9	36.6	5.4	3.3 (0.89)
IRAP causes more hunters/recreationists to lease places for themselves.	2.5	6.1	68.7	19.7	3.0	3.15 (0.68)
IRAP is beneficial to me personally.	17.6	22.8	56.3	2.5	0.8	2.46 (0.84)
IRAP decreases the number of hunters that are leaving the sport.	5.2	8.5	61.7	22.3	2.2	3.08 (0.78)
IRAP creates new opportunities to hunt/recreate on private lands in IL.	2.8	3.3	42.9	46.8	4.2	3.46 (0.75)
IRAP has no impact on recruiting and retaining hunters/recreationists in IL.	4.4	17.2	69.7	7.2	1.4	2.84 (0.67)
When landowners enroll in IRAP, hunters lose access to sites.	2.7	21.2	65.4	8.8	1.9	2.86 (0.68)
IRAP provides extra income for landowners.	3.3	5.0	69.0	21.6	1.1	3.12 (0.66)
Allows me to have control who has access to my land	7.2	15.0	56.8	18.0	3.0	2.95 (0.86)
I support Illinois having IRAP	6.3	6.0	55.5	29.8	2.5	3.16 (0.83)

<sup>a</sup>1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree

Almost 6% of landowners surveyed said they were at all likely to recommend IRAP to a friend, whereas 52% said that recommending IRAP to a friend was unlikely (Table 41). Almost 80% were unlikely to consider enrolling their property into IRAP and 4% would be likely or extremely likely to enroll.

Table 41. Likelihood to perform the following actions regarding IRAP enrollment.

	Extremely Unlikely (%)	Unlikely (%)	Neither (%)	Likely (%)	Extremely Likely (%)	Mean <sup>a</sup> (S.D.)
Recommend IRAP to a friend	24.3	27.5	42.4	4.7	1.0	2.31 (0.93)
Enrolling your property in IRAP	39.7	38.9	17.5	3.1	0.8	1.86 (0.87)

<sup>a</sup>1=Extremely Unlikely, 5=Extremely Likely

Fourteen of those interested in enrolling their land in the program indicated which activities they would allow. Spring youth turkey hunting 3 & 4, youth deer hunting, and small game hunting were among the top IRAP activities in which respondents were interested (Figure 106). Landowners who were unlikely to participate in IRAP commonly did not want hunters or recreationists that they do not know on their property (71%), their land was for them and their family to recreate (70%), and/or their land was currently leased for farming purposes (32%) (Figure 107). Other write-in responses were not knowing anything about IRAP, existing problems with hunters, and feeling hunters should be able to find their own private land to hunt.

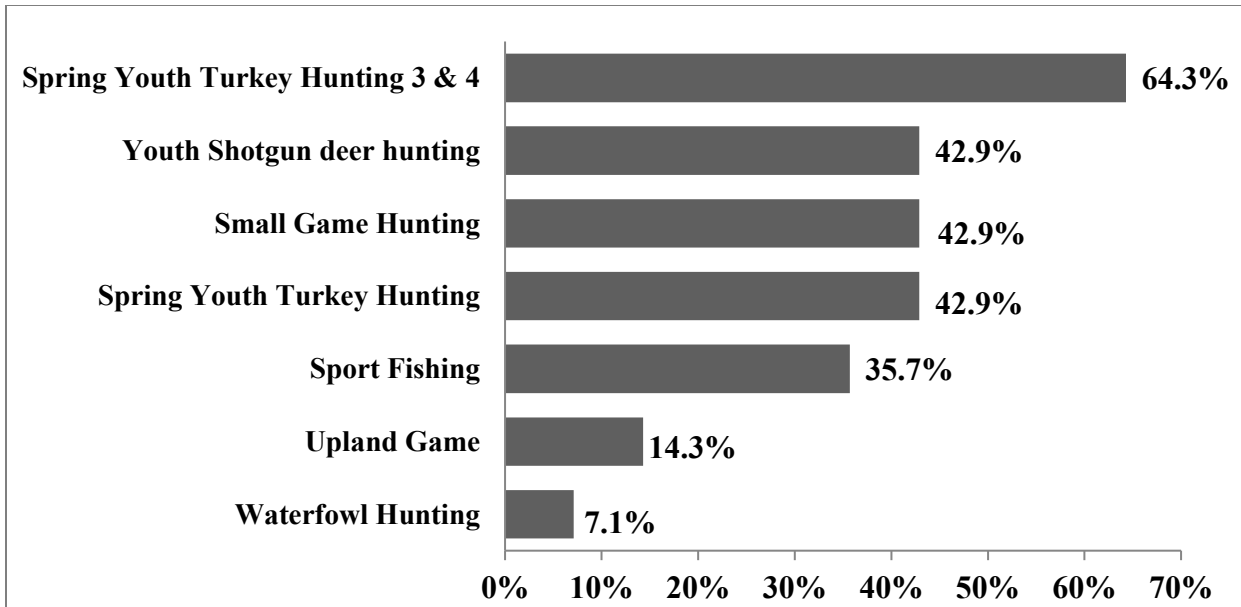


Figure 106. IRAP activities in which respondents were interested ( $n = 14$ ).

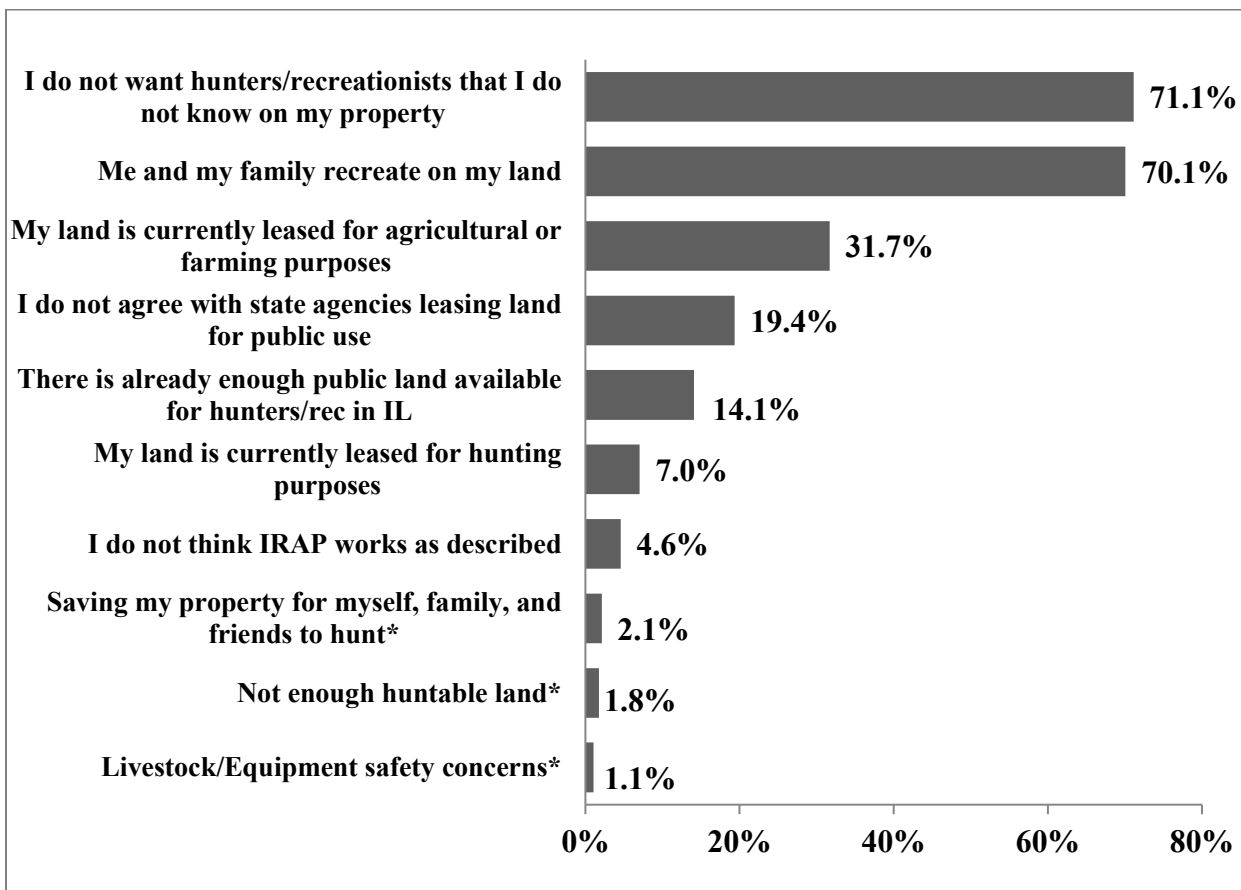


Figure 107. Reasons why participation in IRAP is unlikely ( $n = 284$ ). (Percentages >100 because respondents selected all that applied.) \*Denotes a written in response.

Among those with concerns, 81% were concerned about the behavior of hunters and recreationists, 75% were concerned about personal liability, and 65% were concerned about overall safety (Figure 108). Write in responses included a lack of games species, a desire to know the people who use the property, ethical opposition to hunting, currently allowing multiple uses on property.

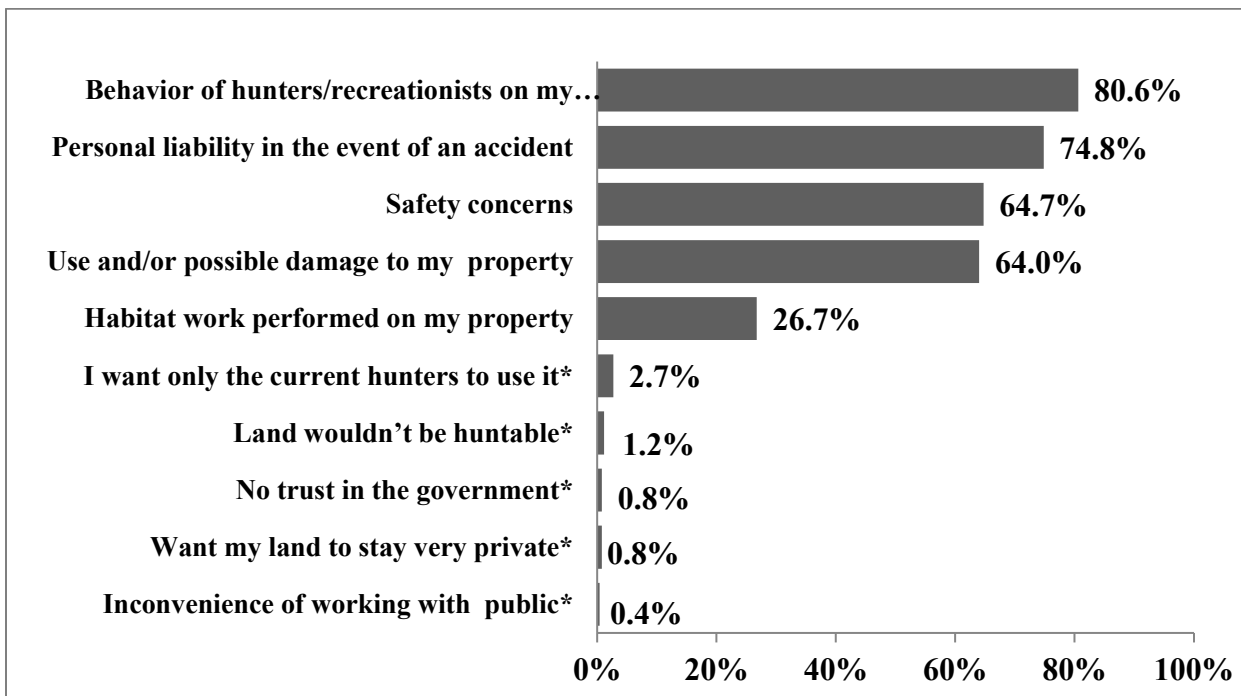


Figure 108. Respondents' concerns about enrolling in IRAP ( $n = 258$ ). (Percentages >100 because respondents selected all that applied.) \*Denotes a written in response.

## Discussion

Landowners throughout the state who responded to our survey helped us better understand the attitudes of non-participating landowners toward IRAP. About 50% of landowners agreed that it was difficult to find places to hunt or recreate in Illinois; and a majority (76%) agreed that landowners have become less willing to grant permission to access their land, only 25% agreed that some type of hunting or recreation program was needed to improve private land access.

Not all respondents were aware that landowners who provided free access to their property have their liability reduced under Illinois law; slightly less than two-thirds were not aware. This percentage is similar to the those responding to a 2001 survey regarding hunter access in Illinois; more than 70% of landowners responding to that survey were unaware of the reduced liability (Miller, et al. 2002). Almost all landowners had at least once previously denied access to hunters asking to hunt their property, with the most common reason being that they kept the land for themselves, family, and friends. Another concern by many respondents was liability. Seventy-two percent of landowners were currently allowing hunting on their property, and very rarely contacted a Conservation Officer about problems involving hunters on their property. Though a few landowners consistently had trouble with hunters that lacked permission. About 78% of respondents indicated that they were satisfied or extremely satisfied with hunters on their property.

Twenty-six percent of landowners surveyed were previously aware of IRAP before receiving the survey questionnaire. A small minority (5.7%) of landowners were likely to recommend IRAP to a friend and 3.9% were likely to enroll their land into IRAP. The most common reasons landowners were unlikely to participate in IRAP were: they did not want hunters or recreationists that they do not know on their property, their land was for them and their family to recreate, and/or their land was currently

leased for farming purposes. They were generally concerned about the behavior of hunters and recreationists on their property as well as personal liability, potential damage, and overall safety.

## Conclusions

### Demographics across all studies

Respondents from the IRAP recreationists and IRAP landowner samples had higher response rates than both statewide samples (Figure 109). This could be due to the survey addressing a salient issue for those already enrolled in the program. Though response rates were significantly lower in 2021, samples were significantly larger resulting in more completed questionnaires for each group. Most respondents were male consistently across questionnaire groups (Figure 110) and those who participate in IRAP were generally younger than statewide recreationists and landowners (Figure 111). These trends were both noted in both 2015 and 2021.

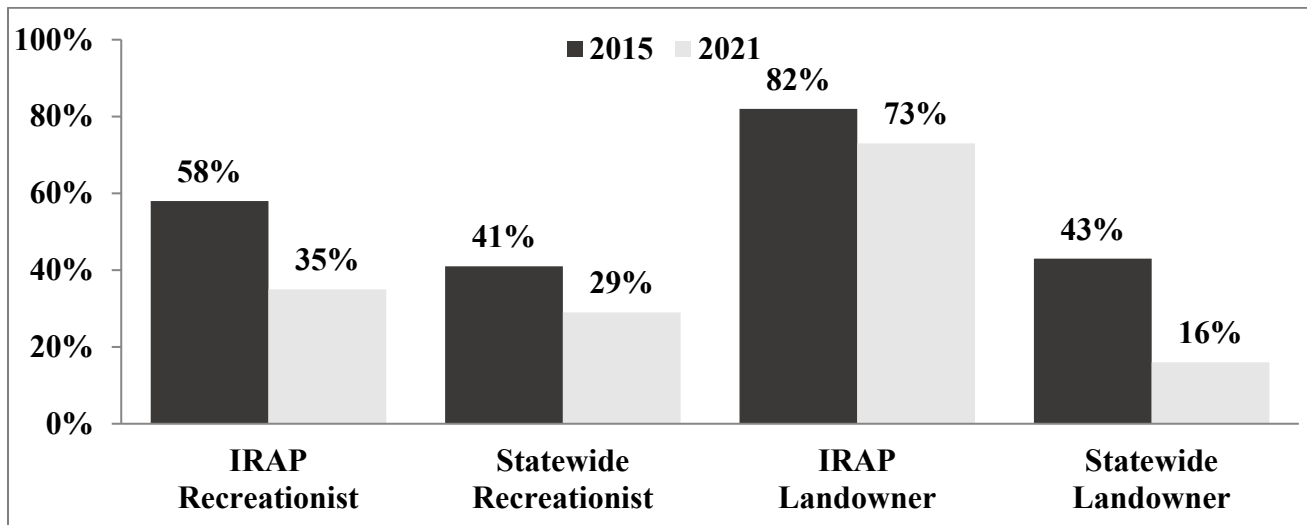


Figure 109. Response rate comparison.



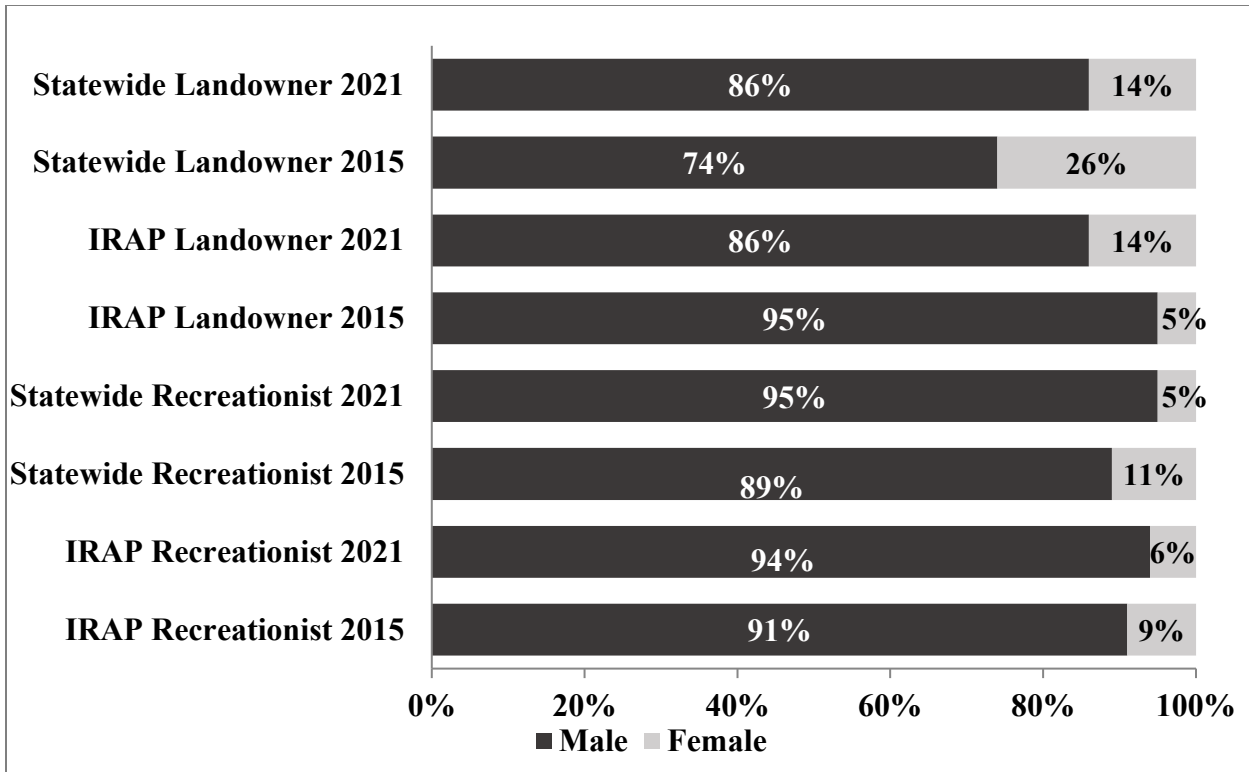


Figure 110. Gender comparison.

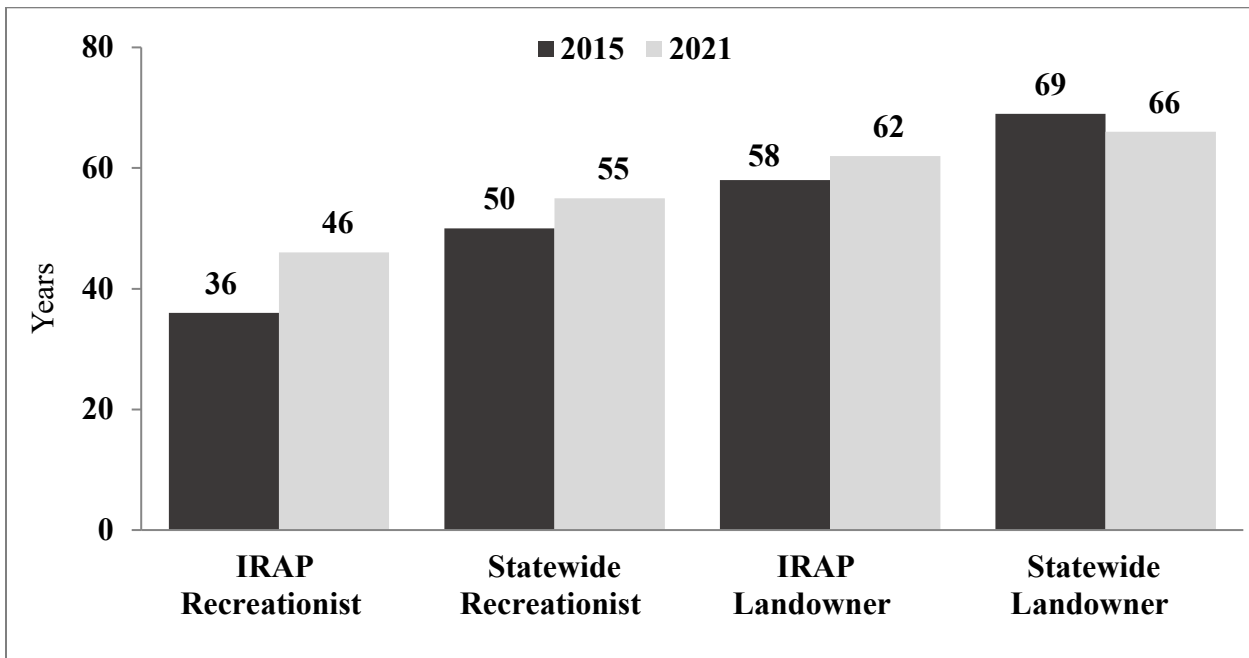


Figure 111. Average age comparison.

### **Comparison of recreationists**

Overall for IRAP participants results of the 2021 study were similar to those from the 2015 study, though to varying degrees. Those who were enrolled in IRAP were satisfied with the program and 90% would like to continue their participation. Findings support the IDNR website as the best way to spread word among recreationists statewide followed by word of mouth, whereas word of mouth has been the best method for landowners statewide. Similarly, to 2015 participants in IRAP recreations were not new to the recreation. IRAP hunters had hunted for an average of 25 years in 2021 and 17 years in 2015 and 97% considered themselves a hunter in 2021 whereas 90% felt that way in 2021. The program is not producing many new hunters. As in 2015, hunters who participate in IRAP are reliant upon public lands for recreation, they would still hunt in the absence of IRAP, but would predominantly be on public lands to do so. This is despite a preference to hunt exclusive private lands. IRAP is opening private lands up for public use to hunters who had their access limited prior to IRAP.

### **Land Access**

IRAP recreationists recreated on public land more often than private land, whereas statewide recreationists recreated on private land more often in 2021 but had hunted public and private equally in 2015. Currently, both groups of recreationists generally preferred to access private land over public land, and those from the IRAP recreationist sample were less successful in their attempts to gain private land access than statewide recreationists (Table 42). This may be part of the reason that they decided to participate in IRAP. When comparing 2015 results to 2021 more statewide recreationists were more likely to agree it was difficult to gain access to private property and some type of program was needed to improve access to private land (Table 42). Additionally in 2015, 29% of statewide recreationist felt it

was not difficult to find places to hunt, whereas only 19% felt it was easy to do so in 2021. These findings suggest, if IRAP is expanded, such efforts would be optimized by focusing on regions of the state with low proportions of public lands.

Table 42. Comparison of land access preferences.

	2015		2021	
	IRAP Recreationist	Statewide Recreationist	IRAP Recreationist	Statewide Recreationist
Prefer to access private land for recreation over public land.	72%	69%	67%	67%
Have been unsuccessful gaining private land access.	55%	34%	60%	41%
Think it is difficult to gain access to private property.	87%	70%	91%	80%
Agree that some type of program is needed to improve private land access.	85%	56%	90%	66%

### IRAP visibility & benefits

Respondents to the statewide recreationists survey who were already aware of IRAP before the questionnaire (26% in 2021 and 16% in 2015) were more likely to have found out about IRAP through the IDNR website, whereas those from the statewide landowner sample who were previously aware of IRAP (25%) were more likely to hear about IRAP through friends (Figure 112). More participants in both questionnaires were aware of IRAP before this questionnaire in 2021 as compared to 2015. Indicating that visibility of the program is increasing. Perceptions of the benefits of IRAP were stable when comparing 2015 to 2021 results. Though fewer IRAP participants in 2021 felt IRAP is needed to improve access to private lands (Table 43).

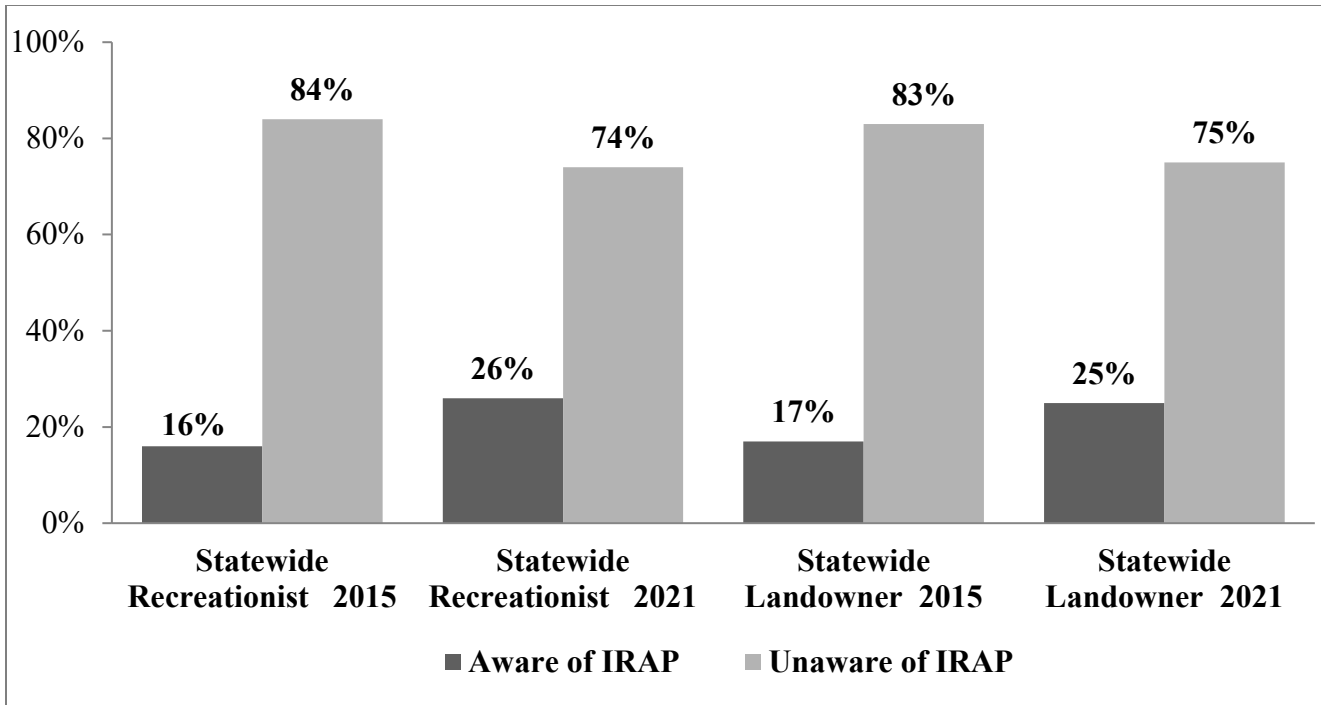


Figure 112. IRAP awareness comparison.

Table 43. Comparison of beliefs regarding IRAP benefits.

	2015		2021	
	IRAP Recreationist	Statewide Recreationist	IRAP Recreationist	Statewide Recreationist
IRAP is beneficial to Illinois.	97%	63%	92%	--
IRAP is beneficial to me personally.	82%	27%	88%	--
IRAP is needed to improve access to private lands.	91%	52%	83%	--

### IRAP participation

Future participation among IRAP participants did not change between studies and was close among those who were not IRAP participants (Table 44). IRAP recreation participation was greatest among those already involved in IRAP and they were much more likely to continue participation than non-IRAP participants were to try IRAP. Though no more likely to try IRAP themselves, when

comparing 2015 and 2021 a significantly greater number of statewide participants were likely to recommend IRAP to a friend.

Table 44. Comparison of future IRAP participation (recreationists).

	2015		2021	
	IRAP Recreationist	Statewide Recreationist	IRAP Recreationist	Statewide Recreationist
Likely to participate in IRAP in the future.	87%	41%	87%	35%
Would recommend IRAP to a friend.	86%	38%	88%	58%

Those who were not involved in IRAP were skeptical it provided additional hunting opportunities; though almost two-thirds felt a program was needed and 68% had been denied access to private land to hunt, consistent with the results of 2015. Most (95%) of participants stated they would hunt in Illinois if IRAP were not available, however one third would hunt less than they currently do. A greater proportion of IRAP participants in both studies were less likely to hunt in the absence of IRAP than non-IRAP participants. In 2021 the primary reason for not participating was access to their own property, an option not provided in 2015. Among the options provided in both years, lack of free time and lack of interest were the most selected responses. Consistently among both studies one quarter would not participate due to a lack of free time. A quarter of participants chose a lack of interest in 2015 and 18% did so in 2021. This was the same proportion as those who selected health problems for their reason which was 9% in 2015.

**Comparison of landowners**

Overall, the opinions of landowners were very stable when comparing both groups between both studies. IRAP statewide landowner participants were much less likely to enroll their land as current

IRAP landowners and a greater percentage of statewide landowners were likely to enroll in 2021 as compared to 2015 (Table 45).

Table 45. Comparison of future IRAP participation (landowners).

	2015		2021	
	IRAP Landowner	Statewide Landowner	IRAP Landowner	Statewide Landowner
Likely to (re)enroll in IRAP in the future.	90%	2%	90%	4%
Would recommend IRAP to a friend.	91%	4%	87%	6%

### IRAP participant satisfaction

Results measuring satisfaction were almost identical comparing 2015 and 2021. In both years, 90% rated their experience good or better, about 90% would recommend IRAP to a friend, and almost 90% felt any concerns they had were addressed. Fewer landowners in 2021 (55%) had concerns prior to enrollment than did in 2015 (62%). Ranking of concerns prior to enrollment were the same between years; behavior of recreationists, followed by personal liability and property damage. A similar drop in “need to contact IDNR Conservation Officers about problem hunters” was seen in both studies as well as a dissatisfaction with hunters. Common recommendations among both studies were to know the names and times of those who were hunting the property, access to the property.

Noted differences among studies involved reasons to enroll their property in IRAP. Though in both years the majority had multiple reasons a greater percentage did so in 2021. Additionally, in 2021 the most selected reason for enrolling was “to improve habitat for wildlife” a significantly greater percentage (77%) than selected this response in 2015 (61%). The primary reason for enrollment in 2015 was “to provide hunting/recreation opportunities to others”, 64% in 2015 and 63% in 2021. Three quarters did so to recruit youth hunters, but this was not asked in 2015. This is consistent with the most

allowed activity on IRAP properties during both studies, youth spring turkey hunting. Though in both studies participants were satisfied overall with IRAP representatives and with the amount of communication there were two distinct differences. Ninety percent of 2021 landowners wanted regular communication and “check-ins” as compared to 75% in 2015. Over two-thirds of those in the 2021 study had been contacted by a representative in the last year and in 2015 that number was less than half (48%).

### **Statewide landowners**

Three aspects of the study were very stable among statewide landowners: concerns over access to recreational land in Illinois, who they allow to recreate on their land, and concerns for allowing recreationists onto their property. Among both studies similar percents of landowners, (40% in 2015 and 50% in 2021) felt it is becoming more difficult to find places to hunt in Illinois. In both, about three-quarters felt landowners are less willing to allow access to hunters and recreationists. The consensus among years is it is harder to hunt due to lack of access. Though consistently about three-quarters do currently allow hunting on their property the majority have denied hunting and recreation opportunities to others because they restrict access to only family and friends. Concerns about enrollment were the same among years: behavior of hunters and recreationists, personal liability, property damage.

The greatest differences between studies years were visibility of IRAP and understanding of liability. Less than two-thirds of recent respondents were aware that landowners who allow free access to their property have their liability reduced under Illinois law, whereas in 2015 it was 80%. Similarly in 2021 a quarter (26%) were aware of IRAP prior to the questionnaire. Sixteen percent were aware of IRAP in 2015, both indicate increased visibility of the IRAP program.

## Discussion

The importance of IRAP as a hunting opportunity is illustrated by the facts that almost three quarters of IRAP participants would prefer to hunt on private land, but almost two thirds have been unsuccessful in their attempts to do so. This corresponds with the opinions of landowners who would prefer to reserve hunting rights for friends, family, and neighbors. Recreationists statewide are willing to try IRAP because they feel it would benefit them, previously they paid to access land for hunting, and most have been denied access to hunting property.

It is important to note hunters who had hunted the least were primarily youth hunters and this level of recruitment matches that for the state as a whole. The benefit of the program manifests itself in the ability to allow private land access that was previously not easily available to hunters. This may be useful in retaining current hunters that are displeased with crowding on public lands. Access to private land alone does not seem to be enticing enough to recruit new hunters. Instead, this increased access seems to draw in those who are looking for more and new areas to hunt. Consequently, IRAP is likely lowering the density of hunters on public sites near IRAP properties by providing additional public lands. Especially considering IRAP hunters are a group who heavily rely on public land and are committed to hunting annually. In this way IRAP is likely improving retention and re-engagement, however, the program does not seem to be recruiting many adult hunters.

Given the amount of effort and financial investment required to start hunting as an adult focusing on youth hunting and mentor programs may yield more recruitment. Satisfaction was very high among youth turkey hunters, and if the program is to continue as a youth recruitment tool it is likely these types of opportunities should be explored. Slightly more than half of IRAP hunters prefer hunting deer, whereas the statewide estimate is closer to 70%. Conversely, 15% of IRAP hunters prefer to hunt turkey whereas that percentage is about half that statewide. This highlights the importance of youth turkey



hunting on IRAP properties and as a potential recruitment among youth. The importance of turkey hunting on IRAP is further demonstrated by its value to participants, in the absence of IRAP, most Spring Turkey season 3 & 4 would not participate in the activity. Expanding the number of IRAP properties enrolled in these activities would be beneficial, as hunters expressed an extreme interest in participating. By percentile, small game hunting (rabbit and squirrel) were the activities that hunters were least likely to continue to do in the absence of IRAP. Exploring the creation of a small game mentorship program could be another approach, though the total number of small game hunters was low.

A lack of properties close to where they live continues to be a reason for unlikely participation in the future. However, contracting landowners to participate may be problematic in regions of the state where they may be needed most. Participants in areas closest to IRAP are more likely to indicate that landowners have refused them hunting rights on their lands. Additionally, landowners expressed concerns about the benefit to them personally and a lack of interest in providing public recreation opportunities. The single most important reason among landowners for denying access was their need to prioritize hunting access for their friends and family. Addressing this need while still opening the land up to public access could entice more landowners to enroll. Most landowners who already participate in IRAP do so because they want to improve habitat quality for game species, and IRAP should continue to target landowners in search of habitat improvement assistance. Ultimately, IRAP is serving an important role in providing public hunting opportunities for Illinois hunters on private lands.

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## **The Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP) Participant Evaluation**



Illinois Department of Natural Resources  
Division of Private Lands  
and  
Illinois Natural History Survey



The Illinois Department of Natural Resources is interested in participant hunter/recreationist evaluations of the Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP). Please take 15 minutes of your time to complete this questionnaire. Your responses will tell us more about participant opinions of IRAP and important issues concerning the IRAP program in Illinois.

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

**Section 1. Outdoor Recreation in Illinois.** The following questions are important to help understand more about you and your opinions of outdoor recreation activities in Illinois. All responses are kept confidential.

1. I am completing this survey for: (Please select **one**)

- Myself, as an IRAP adult participant  
 My child, who is an IRAP participant  
 Myself, as an IRAP youth participant

2. Which of the following outdoor recreational activities do you do? (Please select **all** that apply)

- Hunting     Hiking     Birding     Fishing     Boating     Camping

3. Please rate your level of importance for each of the following activities by circling the number that best matches your response.

	Not all Important	Slightly Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	I do not participate
Hunting	1	2	3	4	5
Hiking	1	2	3	4	5
Birding	1	2	3	4	5
Fishing	1	2	3	4	5
Camping	1	2	3	4	5
Boating	1	2	3	4	5

4. On which type of land do you hunt/recreate **most often**?

- My own private property     Public property (State, Federal, and other public lands)  
 IRAP land     Private property **not** owned by me  
 Private outfitter property     Private property owned by my family

5. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements by circling the response that best matches your opinion.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree
It is difficult to find places to hunt/recreate in Illinois.	1	2	3	4	5
It is difficult to gain access to private properties for hunting/recreation activities in Illinois.	1	2	3	4	5
Landowners have become less willing to grant permission to hunt/recreate on private land.	1	2	3	4	5
It has become easy to establish and maintain private landowner contacts in Illinois.	1	2	3	4	5
Some type of hunter/recreation program is needed to improve access to private land in Illinois.	1	2	3	4	5

**Section 2. The Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP).** IRAP was initiated in 2011 by Illinois DNR to provide access to private land for a variety of outdoor recreational activities. **You are receiving this questionnaire because you have previously or are currently enrolled as an IRAP participant.**

1. How did you become aware of IRAP? (Please select **all** that apply)

- Illinois DNR website                       National Wild Turkey Federation                       Social Media  
 Newspaper/Magazine article                       Pheasants Forever                       An IRAP participant  
 An IRAP landowner                       Other (Please identify): \_\_\_\_\_

2. Please report your participation in **IRAP activities** using the following table. (Please enter 0 if you did not participate or apply for the activity listed)

	Total # of times you applied	Please estimate how many days you participated in the following activities for each year. Count part of a day as a full day.				
		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Spring Youth Turkey Hunting	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Rabbit Hunting	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Archery Deer Hunting	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Spring Season 3 & 4 Turkey Hunting	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Youth Shotgun Deer Hunting	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Squirrel Hunting	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Upland Game Hunting	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Waterfowl Hunting	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Sport Fishing	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Non-motorized Boat Access	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

3. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements by circling the response that **best** matches your opinion.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I prefer to access private land over public land for outdoor recreation in Illinois.	1	2	3	4	5
I do not have time to meet with private landowners to obtain access to private land.	1	2	3	4	5
I have been unsuccessful in my attempts to gain private land access in Illinois.	1	2	3	4	5
I applied to participate in IRAP because I wanted to try hunting or fishing for the first time.	1	2	3	4	5
I applied to participate in IRAP to find private access for outdoor activities in Illinois.	1	2	3	4	5
Public land for hunting/recreation in Illinois is too crowded.	1	2	3	4	5
I applied to participate in IRAP to fish new places in Illinois.	1	2	3	4	5
I applied to participate in IRAP to hunt new places in Illinois.	1	2	3	4	5
I applied because I was denied a permit at a state ran site.	1	2	3	4	5

**Section 3. Your IRAP experience.** The following questions are important to learn more about your opinions of IRAP and your experience with the program. All responses are kept confidential.

1. How would you rate your **overall satisfaction** with IRAP?

Extremely Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither	Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied
1	2	3	4	5

2. Before receiving this questionnaire, which of the following activities were you aware were offered through IRAP? (Check all that apply)

- Youth turkey hunting       Squirrel hunting       Spring turkey hunting seasons 3 & 4  
 Rabbit hunting       Archery deer hunting       Waterfowl hunting  
 Fishing       Upland game hunting       Youth Shotgun deer hunting

3. Have you ever applied to access IRAP properties and **not** been selected?  Yes  No

3a. If “Yes”, did you **reapply** to participate in the same IRAP activity the following year?  Yes  No

4. On average, how far did you travel to participate in IRAP activities?

- <1 mile     1-25 miles     26-50 miles     51-75 miles     76-100 miles     >100 miles

5. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements by circling the response that **best** matches your opinion.

IRAP...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
is needed to improve hunter access to private lands in Illinois.	1	2	3	4	5
is needed to improve recreationist access to private lands in Illinois.	1	2	3	4	5
is beneficial for Illinois.	1	2	3	4	5
is beneficial to me personally.	1	2	3	4	5
gives me the opportunity to spend quality time with family and friends	1	2	3	4	5
causes more hunters/recreationists to lease places for themselves.	1	2	3	4	5
decreases the number of hunters that are leaving the sport.	1	2	3	4	5
creates new opportunities to hunt/recreate on private lands in Illinois.	1	2	3	4	5
has had no impact on retaining hunters/recreationists in Illinois.	1	2	3	4	5
has had no impact on recruiting hunters/recreationists in Illinois.	1	2	3	4	5
gives me a stronger connection with nature.	1	2	3	4	5
is beneficial to wildlife	1	2	3	4	5
improves quality of native vegetation	1	2	3	4	5
causes hunters to lose access to sites.	1	2	3	4	5

6. Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the following statements about IRAP by circling the response that **best** matches your opinion.

	Extremely Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither	Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied
Application process for IRAP activities	1	2	3	4	5
Lottery selection process for IRAP activities	1	2	3	4	5
Number of IRAP activities for youth hunters	1	2	3	4	5
Number of IRAP activities for military veteran hunters	1	2	3	4	5
Number of IRAP activities for first-time adult hunters	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of IRAP properties in your area	1	2	3	4	5
Timing of activities for IRAP properties	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of wildlife habitat on IRAP properties	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of private lands selected for IRAP sites	1	2	3	4	5
Abundance of wildlife on IRAP properties	1	2	3	4	5

7. Without IRAP in which of the following activities **would you NOT participate?** (Please select all that apply)

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spring Youth Turkey Hunting | <input type="checkbox"/> Archery Deer Hunting | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Shotgun Deer  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spring Turkey Season 3 or 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing              | <input type="checkbox"/> Upland Game Hunting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Squirrel Hunting            | <input type="checkbox"/> Rabbit Hunting       | <input type="checkbox"/> Waterfowl Hunting   |

**Section 4. IRAP and hunting in Illinois.** The following questions are important to learn more about your IRAP hunting experience and plans for future hunting activities in Illinois. **If you have never hunted an IRAP property, please go to Section 5.**

1. Please indicate which **IRAP hunting permits** you applied to hunt during the **2019-20 hunting seasons.**

IRAP Permit	Applied		Received		How satisfied were you with the IRAP application process?				
					Extremely Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither	Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied
Spring Turkey Hunting	Y	N	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
Archery Deer Hunting	Y	N	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
Youth Shotgun Deer	Y	N	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
Squirrel Hunting	Y	N	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
Fishing	Y	N	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
Rabbit Hunting	Y	N	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
Upland Game Hunting	Y	N	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5
Waterfowl Hunting	Y	N	Y	N	1	2	3	4	5

2. How many different **IRAP sites** have you hunted in Illinois? \_\_\_\_\_ Sites
3. Did you see the game species you were hunting during your visit to the IRAP site? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No
4. Did you harvest game while hunting on an IRAP site: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No
5. How satisfied were you with the **number of shooting opportunities** while you were hunting on IRAP properties?

Extremely Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither	Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied
1	2	3	4	5

6. Have you ever participated in IRAP youth turkey hunting? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No (If “No”, please go to question 7)

6a. If IRAP were not available, would you still apply for state-wide turkey hunting during seasons 3 and 4?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, if I get drawn for a permit \_\_\_\_\_ No

7. How interested would you be in having **IRAP youth turkey season occur later** to avoid bad weather and/or Easter weekend?

Not at all Interested	Slightly Interested	Somewhat Interested	Very Interested	Extremely Interested
1	2	3	4	5

8. Please indicate your level of interest with the following by circling the number that best matches your interest level

	Not at all Interested	Slightly Interested	Somewhat Interested	Very Interested	Extremely Interested
IDNR offering a mentored hunting program for youth.	1	2	3	4	5
IDNR offering a mentored hunting program for new/beginning hunters.	1	2	3	4	5
Enroll in a mentor program as a new hunter.	1	2	3	4	5
Participating in a mentor program as a mentor	1	2	3	4	5
Encouraging friends to enroll as new hunters in a mentor program	1	2	3	4	5
Encouraging friends to participate as a mentor	1	2	3	4	5

9. **If IRAP was not available**, would you still hunt in Illinois? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No (If “No”, please go to #10)

9a. If IRAP was not available, what type of land would you hunt? (Please select all that apply)

\_\_\_\_\_ My own private property \_\_\_\_\_ Public property (State, Federal, and other public lands)

\_\_\_\_\_ Private property owned by family \_\_\_\_\_ Private outfitter property

\_\_\_\_\_ Private property owned by friends \_\_\_\_\_ Private property **not** owned by myself, family, or friends

9b. If IRAP was not available, how often would you hunt?

Much Less Often	Less Often	About the Same	More Often	Much More Often
1	2	3	4	5



10. Please state how likely you will do the following by circling the response that best matches your opinion.

	Extremely Unlikely	Unlikely	Neither	Likely	Extremely Likely
How likely is it that you would seek permission to hunt private property not enrolled in IRAP?	1	2	3	4	5
How likely is it that you would participate in additional IRAP activities?	1	2	3	4	5
How likely is it that you would recommend IRAP to a friend?	1	2	3	4	5
How likely is it that you will participate in IRAP in the future?	1	2	3	4	5

10a. **If your future participation in IRAP is unlikely**, what reason(s) have influenced your decision?

(Please select **all** that apply)

- Lack of free time     
  Lack of hunting partners     
  Health problems  
 Unable to be drawn for IRAP     
  More places to hunt     
  Too expensive  
 Not enough IRAP activities     
  Poor economy     
  Lack of interest  
 Too many regulations     
  Regulations are too complicated     
  Not enough wildlife  
 Lack of harvest success     
  Not enough IRAP properties close to home  
 Other (Please explain): \_\_\_\_\_

11. Please rate the level of **importance** each of the following has for your future participation in IRAP by circling the number that best matches your response.

	Not all Important	Slightly Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
Having a mentor to guide you	1	2	3	4	5
Successfully harvesting game on IRAP property	1	2	3	4	5
Confidence in your ability to successfully harvest game	1	2	3	4	5
Confidence in your level of skill to safely hunt	1	2	3	4	5
Having enough free time to hunt	1	2	3	4	5
Having enough partners to hunt with	1	2	3	4	5
Having IRAP property close to your home	1	2	3	4	5
Crowding on IRAP properties	1	2	3	4	5
IRAP sites having high quality habitat	1	2	3	4	5
An easy application process to IRAP	1	2	3	4	5
Seeing game species on IRAP property	1	2	3	4	5

12. Please rate your level of **satisfaction** with each of the following aspects of IRAP by circling the number that best matches your response.

	Not all Satisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Moderately Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
Availability of a mentor to guide you	1	2	3	4	5
Successfully harvesting game on IRAP property	1	2	3	4	5
Confidence in your ability to successfully harvest game	1	2	3	4	5
Confidence in your level of skill to safely hunt	1	2	3	4	5
Amount of free time you have to hunt	1	2	3	4	5
The number of partners you have to hunt with	1	2	3	4	5
Proximity of IRAP properties to home	1	2	3	4	5
Number participants on IRAP properties	1	2	3	4	5
The quality of habitat on IRAP sites	1	2	3	4	5
The IRAP application process	1	2	3	4	5
Seeing game species on IRAP property	1	2	3	4	5

**Section 5. Hunting in Illinois.** The following questions are important to learn more about your Illinois hunting experience and plans for future hunting activities in Illinois.

1. Would you consider yourself a hunter? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

2. Please rate **your skills** in comparison to other hunters as they apply to hunting.

	Novice		Intermediate		Expert
Overall knowledge of hunting.	1	2	3	4	5
Overall knowledge of game management.	1	2	3	4	5
Overall skill as a hunter.	1	2	3	4	5

3. How many **years** have you hunted? \_\_\_\_\_ Years

4. How many **years** have you hunted in Illinois? \_\_\_\_\_ Years

5. Which of the following best describes your hunting partners? (Please select all that apply)

\_\_\_\_\_ I hunt by myself      \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse      \_\_\_\_\_ Parent(s)      \_\_\_\_\_ Children  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Non-immediate family      \_\_\_\_\_ Friend(s)      \_\_\_\_\_ Guide/Outfitter      \_\_\_\_\_ IRAP Hunter(s)

6. Which of the following best describes how often you purchase an Illinois hunting license?

\_\_\_\_\_ Every year      \_\_\_\_\_ Most years      \_\_\_\_\_ Occasional years      \_\_\_\_\_ Rarely      \_\_\_\_\_ Never

7. Did you purchase a hunting license for the 2020-21 hunting season? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes      \_\_\_\_\_ No (If **No**, skip to 9)

8. Did you hunt during the 2020-21 season? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes      \_\_\_\_\_ No (If **No**, skip to 9)

8a. Which of the following game did you hunt? (Please select all that apply)

- Deer                       Geese                       Ducks                       Turkeys  
 Quail                       Squirrel                       Rabbits                       Doves  
 Furbearers                       Pheasants                       Other (please list): \_\_\_\_\_

8b. On which types of land did you hunt during 2020-21?

- Private land only                       Public land only                       Both private and public land

8c. If you hunted on both private and public land, on which did you hunt most often?

- Public land                       Private land

9. 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 2020-21 hunting season?

- Yes                       No (If **No**, skip to 10)

9a. For which of the following permits did you apply for?

- Free Upland Permit                       Spring Turkey                       Waterfowl                       Firearm/Muzzleloader Deer

9b. Were you successful in drawing a permit?                       Yes                       No

10. Did you hunt in another state during the 2020-21 hunting season?                       Yes                       No (If **No**, skip to 11)

10a. What was the primary reason for hunting in another state? (Please select only one)

- Species not found in Illinois                       Unsuccessful drawing a permit in Illinois  
 To hunt with friends/family                       Have private land access in another state  
 To try something new                       Lack of public land in Illinois  
 Other (please list): \_\_\_\_\_

11. How much do you agree with the following statements about hunting and conservation? Choose the option that best matches your response.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree
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 for managing wildlife populations	1	2	3	4	5
Hunting provides a sustainable source of food	1	2	3	4	5
Hunters are important advocates for conservation efforts	1	2	3	4	5
Recruiting new hunters creates more competition for permits	1	2	3	4	5
Recruiting new hunters creates crowding at public hunting sites	1	2	3	4	5

12. Do you belong to a hunting/conservation organization (e.g., Pheasants Forever, NWTF, DU)

Yes  No

13. If you could only have one day to hunt, which of the following would you hunt? Please check only **ONE** response.

Deer  Geese  Ducks  Turkeys  Pheasants  
 Quail  Squirrel  Rabbits  Doves  Furbearers  
 None  Other (please list): \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 6. Background information.** The following questions are important to help understand more about IRAP recreation participants and your outdoor recreational activities in Illinois. All responses are kept confidential.

1. Please give your age.  Years

2. What is your gender?  Male  Female

3. How long have you lived in Illinois?  Years

4. Do you have access to the Internet in your home?  Yes  No

5. Do you know a female family member or friend who has expressed interest in hunting but is uncomfortable trying it on their own?

Yes  No

6. Do you have friends or family that would be interested in attending if IDNR had a mentored hunting program for youth and beginning hunters?

Yes  No

7. Which of the following best describes where you live now?

Rural area  Small city (5,000 to 49,999)  
 Small town  Medium city (50,000 to 500,000)  
 Suburb of medium or large city  Large city (over 500,000)

8. What is your approximate total (gross) household income?

less than \$15,000  \$15,000 to \$29,999  \$30,000 to \$44,999  
 \$45,000 to \$59,999  \$60,000 to \$74,999  \$75,000 to \$89,999  
 \$90,000 or more

9. What is your highest level of education?

High school or GED  Technical school  Associates degree  
 Bachelor's degree  Master's degree or higher

**Comments:**

Funded by the United States Department of Agriculture,  
Voluntary Public Access Habitat Improvement Program

**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.

# Public Access on Private Property with IL Recreational Access Program



*IRAP is funded by the NRCS Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program. IRAP leases private land for semi-controlled public access activities*

Activity	Who Can Apply	How	When to Apply	IRAP Activity Date	Additional Information
Youth TURKEY Hunting	Licensed youth hunters age 17 and under	Complete online application	Online application available November 20	Youth Spring Turkey Season	Must hunt with a non-hunting adult
Spring TURKEY Season Segments 3 & 4	Any licensed hunter	Complete online application	Online application available November 20	North/South 3rd and 4th spring season	
SPORTFISHING	Any licensed angler	Register and reserve a site online	Online reservations available March 25	April 1—September 30 Friday—Monday	No boats
SQUIRREL Hunting	Any licensed hunter	Register and reserve a site online	Online reservations available July 25	August 1—September 15	Up to 4 in hunting group
Youth Shotgun DEER hunting	Licensed youth hunters age 17 and under	Complete online application	Online application available July 1	Second 3-day weekend in October	Must hunt with a non-hunting adult
Archery DEER Hunting	Any licensed hunter	Complete online application	Online application available July 1	Month of October and December 16-31	
WATERFOWL Hunting	Any licensed hunter	Complete application	Application available August 15	November 1– December 31	Blinds onsite; Dogs allowed; up to 4 in hunting group
UPLAND GAME Hunting	Any licensed hunter	Complete application	Application available October 1	2-day weekend hunts; last 3 weekends in December	Dogs allowed; Up to 4 in hunting group
RABBIT Hunting	Any licensed hunter	Register and reserve a site online	Online reservations available November 25	December 10-31	Dogs Allowed; up to 4 in hunting group

IRAP is available to Illinois residents and non-residents. A participant must have an IRAP site permit and reservation prior to using any site. Participants must follow all laws and obtain necessary permits and licenses as outlined in the Illinois Digest of Hunting and Trapping and Fishing Regulations. Additional information can be found at: <https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/conservation/IRAP> or by calling 217-782-0137

Appendix A.2: IRAP Participant Cover Letter #1



ILLINOIS NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY

Prairie Research Institute  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

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January 28, 2022

Dear IRAP participant,

You are one of a select group of Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP) participants asked to provide information about your opinions and experiences with the program. The information you and other selected hunters and recreationists furnish our Illinois DNR program managers is vital for evaluating IRAP and learning about potential improvements.

This survey is limited to hunters and recreationists who have ever applied to participate in the IRAP program. Please take a few minutes to complete the enclosed questionnaire **even if you are not currently participating in IRAP**. A stamped envelope is provided for returning the questionnaire to us.

Thank you for your time and assistance.

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

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## ILLINOIS NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY

Prairie Research Institute  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

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March 08, 2022

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Craig A. Miller  
Human Dimensions Research Program

1816 South Oak Street,  
Champaign, Illinois 61820 USA

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RABBIT Hunting	Any licensed hunter	Register and reserve a site online	Online reservations available November 25	December 10-31	Dogs Allowed; up to 4 in hunting group

IRAP is available to Illinois residents and non-residents. A participant must have an IRAP site permit and reservation prior to using any site. Participants must follow all laws and obtain necessary permits and licenses as outlined in the Illinois Digest of Hunting and Trapping and Fishing Regulations. Additional information can be found at: <https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/conservation/IRAP> or by calling 217-782-0137

## **Notice to Parents**

Parents - please note: If you are receiving this questionnaire addressed to your child, we apologize as the age of individual hunters is not available to us. This questionnaire should be filled out by an adult, age 18 or older. If the recipient of this questionnaire is under the age of 18, we ask that a parent or guardian fill it out.

Appendix A.5: IRAP Participant Postcard

Dear IRAP Participant,

Recently you were mailed a questionnaire about your experiences with the Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP). We have not yet received your response. **If you have already returned the questionnaire, we thank you. If you have not returned the questionnaire, please do so as soon as possible. Your input is very important!**

Your name and address will be deleted from our mailing list when your questionnaire is received. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

## The Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP)

### Landowner Evaluation



Illinois Department of Natural Resources  
Division of Private Lands  
and  
Illinois Natural History Survey



The Illinois Department of Natural Resources is interested in landowner evaluations of the Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP). Please take 15 minutes of your time to complete this questionnaire. Your responses will tell us more about landowner opinions of IRAP and important issues concerning the IRAP program in Illinois.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!**

All of your responses will be kept confidential.  
Please return this survey in the postage-paid return envelope provided.  
Disclosure of information is voluntary.

**Section 1. Land use decisions.** The following questions are important to help us understand more about **Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP)** landowners and land-use decisions made on private property in Illinois. All responses are kept confidential.

1. Are you **currently** enrolled in IRAP?  Yes (Please go to question 1a)  No (Please go to question 1b)

1a. If “Yes”, how many years has your land been enrolled in IRAP \_\_\_\_\_

1b. If “No”, why are you no longer enrolled in IRAP? (Please select all that apply)

I leased the property for other purposes

I entered into a lease with other hunters

I sold the property

I was dissatisfied with the IRAP program

I wanted to control of all activities on my land

Other (Please identify): \_\_\_\_\_

2. Why did you choose to enroll your land(s) into IRAP? (Please select all that apply)

To improve habitat for wildlife

To have a habitat management plan implemented on my land

To receive financial cost-share assistance for habitat projects

To receive technical assistance with habitat improvements

To have someone (participants) report trespassers while using my land

Financial lease payment incentive provided by Illinois DNR

To have semi-controlled hunting/recreation activities on my land

To provide hunting/recreation opportunities for others

To help recruit youth and new hunters by providing a place for them to hunt

Other (Please identify): \_\_\_\_\_

3. Did you have concerns about enrolling in IRAP?  Yes  No (If “No”, please go to **question 4**)

3a. Please indicate which of the following concerns you had about enrolling in IRAP. (Please select all that apply)

Concerns about the habitat work performed on my property

Concerns about the behavior of hunters/recreationists on my property

Concerns about the use and/or possible damage to my property

Concerns for the safety of my family, livestock, pets, and/or hunters/recreationists on my property

Concerns about personal liability in the event of an accident

Concerns about not being able to use my property during IRAP activities

Other (Please identify): \_\_\_\_\_

4. Were all your concerns adequately addressed by the Illinois DNR representative who enrolled you in IRAP?

Yes (If “Yes”, please go to **question 5**)  No (If “No”, please go to question 4a)

4a. If “No”, which concerns were **not** addressed? (Please select all that apply)

- Concerns about the habitat work performed on my property
- Concerns about the behavior of hunters/recreationists on my property
- Concerns about the use and/or possible damage to my personal property
- Concerns for the safety of my family, livestock, pets, and/or hunters/recreationists on my property
- Concerns about personal liability in the event of an accident
- Concerns about not being able to use my property during IRAP activities
- Other (Please identify): \_\_\_\_\_

5. Please rate your level of importance for the following concepts by circling the response that best matches your opinion.

	Extremely Unimportant	Unimportant	Neither	Important	Extremely Important
Protecting native plant species on my land	1	2	3	4	5
Preserving native plant species on my land	1	2	3	4	5
Restoring native habitats on my land	1	2	3	4	5
Improving the quality of habitat on my land for game species	1	2	3	4	5
Improving quality of habitat on my land for non-game species	1	2	3	4	5
Increasing the amount habit on my land for game species	1	2	3	4	5
Increasing the amount of habitat on my land for non-game species	1	2	3	4	5

**Section 2. Before your IRAP enrollment.** The following questions are important to learn about your experience leading up to your enrollment in the IRAP program. All responses are kept confidential.

1. Prior to enrolling in IRAP, did you have any habitat improvements implemented on your property?

Yes (If “Yes”, please go to **question 1a**)     No (If “No”, please go to **Question 2**)

1a. Were any of the habitat improvements due to your enrollment in a conservation program?

Yes (If “Yes”, please go to **question 1b**)     No (If “No”, please go to **Question 2**)

1b. If yes, in which of the following did you participate? (Please select all that apply)

- Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)
- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
- Farmable Wetlands Program (FWP)
- Source Water Protection Program (SWPP)
- State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)
- Wetland Reserve Program (WRP)
- Other (Please identify) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Which of the following recreations did you allow non-family members to do on your property **before enrolling in IRAP**? (Please select all that apply)

- Hunting                       Trapping                       Fishing  
 Camping                       Boating                       Birding  
 Off-roading                       Other (Please identify): \_\_\_\_\_

3. Did you allow any hunting on your property **before enrolling in IRAP**?

- Yes                       No (If “No”, please go to **question 6**)

3a. Who was allowed to hunt the property **before your enrollment in IRAP**? (Please select all that apply)

- Me and/or immediate family                       I leased hunting rights to the property  
 Extended family, friends, and neighbors                       Hunters who requested permission  
 The property was open to anyone who wanted to hunt and they did **not** have to ask for permission

3b. Annually, how many of each of the following were hunting the property **before your enrollment in IRAP**?

- Me and/or immediate family                       hunters each year  
 I leased hunting rights to the property                       hunters each year  
 Extended family, friends, and neighbors                       hunters each year  
 Hunters who requested permission                       hunters each year  
 Hunters did **not** ask for permission, property was open to hunting                       hunters each year

4. How would you rate your satisfaction with the hunters who hunted your property **prior to enrolling in IRAP**?

Extremely Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither	Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied
1	2	3	4	5

5. What type of game did people hunt or trap on the property **before IRAP**? (Please select all that apply)

- Dove                       Waterfowl (ducks, geese)                       Small game (rabbit, squirrel)  
 Predators (coyote, fox, raccoon)                       Deer                       Turkey  
 Upland birds (pheasant, quail)                       Furbearers (trapping)                       I don’t know

6. Before enrolling in IRAP, how often did you need to contact an Illinois DNR Conservation Officer or other law enforcement to address problems with the following groups on your property?

	Never	Once	Infrequently (Once every few years)	Frequently (Once a year)	Always (Multiple times a year)
Hunters without permission	1	2	3	4	5
Hunters with permission	1	2	3	4	5
Other recreationists without permission	1	2	3	4	5
Other recreationists with permission	1	2	3	4	5

7. Have you ever denied access to hunters asking for permission to hunt your property?

- Yes (If “Yes,” please go to questions 7a and 7b)                       No (If “No,” please go to Section 3)



7a. Which of the following reasons best describe why you have denied hunters permission to hunt on your land?

(Please select all that apply)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hunters were inconsiderate of my land | <input type="checkbox"/> I got tired of people asking to hunt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concerns for my family's safety       | <input type="checkbox"/> Liability                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Damage to property/equipment          | <input type="checkbox"/> Injury to livestock                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I don't like hunting/hunters          | <input type="checkbox"/> I have other hunting arrangements    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I keep it for myself/family/friends   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please identify): _____       |

7b. How often would you say that you deny hunting access to your property for hunting?

Never	Rarely	Infrequently	Sometimes	Frequently	Often	Always
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Section 3. Your IRAP experience.** The following questions are important to learn about your experience whereas being enrolled in IRAP. **If you are no longer enrolled, we would still like to receive your feedback about IRAP.**

1. How would you rate your **overall experience** with IRAP?

Extremely poor	Very poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Extremely good
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. Please give your satisfaction with the following by circling the number that best matches your response.

	Extremely Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither	Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied
Overall IRAP experience	1	2	3	4	5
Service you received from the Illinois DNR representative administering IRAP.	1	2	3	4	5
Procedures required for participation in the IRAP program.	1	2	3	4	5
Amount of communication between yourself and IDNR representatives for IRAP.	1	2	3	4	5
Service and professionalism of persons who performed habitat work on your IRAP property.	1	2	3	4	5
Behavior of hunters who have visited your IRAP property.	1	2	3	4	5
Behavior of non-hunting recreationists who have visited your IRAP property.	1	2	3	4	5
The timing of IRAP activities	1	2	3	4	5

3. Did you have any habitat projects (improvements) implemented on your property as part of the IRAP program?

Yes  No (If no, please go to question 5)

3a. Did implementing these habitat projects (improvements) increase the number of acres of improved habitat?

Yes  No

4. How would you rate the **quality of the wildlife habitat improvements** made on your enrolled property?

Very low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
1	2	3	4	5

5. Which of the following do you use for information about habitat improvement and land management practices? (Please select all that apply)

- Hunting organizations (Ducks Unlimited, National Wild Turkey Federation, etc. )
- Conservation non-governmental organizations (The Nature Conservancy, Sierra Club, etc.)
- Federally sponsored programs (Conservation Reserve Program, Wetland Reserve Program, etc.)
- State sponsored programs (Illinois recreational access program, etc. )
- Other landowners who I personally know.
- Other landowners who I find online.
- Other (Please identify): \_\_\_\_\_

5a. Please identify the organizations you use most often (Ducks Unlimited, Sierra Club, etc.).

\_\_\_\_\_

5b. Which types of resources do you prefer to receive from these organizations? (Please select all that apply)

- Mailed printed materials such as books and pamphlets
- Videos that can be watched at any time (Youtube, DVD's, etc.)
- Virtual learning opportunities such as webinars and land improvement demonstrations.
- In person demonstrations (On-site instruction)
- Other (Please identify): \_\_\_\_\_

6. Which IRAP participant groups, if any, have your neighbors complained to you about? (Please select all that apply)

- IRAP hunter behavior
- IRAP trapper behavior
- IRAP angler behavior
- IRAP non-hunting recreationists
- Other (Please identify): \_\_\_\_\_

7. Did you have any incidents that were handled by an Illinois DNR Conservation Officer on your IRAP property?

- Yes
- No (If "No", please go to **question 7**)

7a. If "Yes", please indicate what type of incidents occurred. (Please select all that apply)

- Trespassing
- Poaching
- Property Damage
- Conflict between users
- Vehicle use
- Littering
- Safety violations
- Other (Please identify): \_\_\_\_\_

8. **After this property was enrolled in IRAP**, how often did you need to contact an Illinois DNR Conservation Officer or other law enforcement to address problems with the following groups on your property?

	Never	Once	Infrequently (Every few years)	Frequently (Once a year)	Always (Multiple times a year)
IRAP hunters	1	2	3	4	5
Other IRAP recreationists	1	2	3	4	5

9. Has an Illinois DNR IRAP representative "checked in" with you this year?  Yes  No

10. How important would an annual "check in" by an Illinois DNR IRAP representative be to you?

Extremely Unimportant	Unimportant	Neither	Important	Extremely Important
1	2	3	4	5



4. **Since enrolling in IRAP**, how many non-IRAP participants have hunted the property?  
 None     1-5     6-10     11-15     >15     I don't know
5. **Since enrolling in IRAP** who has hunted the property? (Please select all that apply)  
 Me and/or immediate family     Only IRAP participants hunted  
 Extended family, friends, and neighbors     Hunters who requested permission  
 The property was open to anyone who wanted to hunt and they did **not** have to ask for permission
- 5a. **If you hunted the property**, how often were you able to hunt compared to years before your IRAP enrollment?  

Much Less Often	Less Often	About the Same	More Often	Much More Often
1	2	3	4	5
6. **Since enrolling in IRAP**, which of the following did non-IRAP participants hunt? (Please select all that apply)  
 Waterfowl (ducks, geese)     Deer     Turkey     Predators (coyote, fox, etc.)  
 Small game (rabbit, squirrel)     Dove     Upland birds (pheasant, quail)

**Section 5. Background information.** The following questions about yourself are important to help understand more about how private landowners in Illinois feel about conservation programs. All responses are kept confidential.

1. Please give your age.     Years
2. What is your gender?     Male     Female
3. Do you live on the property you enrolled in IRAP?     Yes     No
4. For the private property that you own, who has the primary responsibility for making decisions? (Please select one)  
 I am the sole decision-maker     I share decision-making with my spouse  
 I share decision-making with my relatives     I share decision-making with non-family business partners
5. What county is your IRAP property located in?     County
6. Approximately what percentage of your total net household income is from the private property that you own?  
 0 to 10%     11% to 25%     26% to 50%     51% to 75%     76% to 100%
7. What is your highest level of education?  
 High school or GED     Bachelor's degree  
 Technical school     Master's degree or higher  
 Associates degree

**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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January 01, 2022

Dear landowner,

You are one of a select group of Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP) landowners asked to provide information about your opinions and experiences with IRAP during your enrollment. The information you and other selected landowners furnish our Illinois Department of Natural Resources land managers is vital. Your evaluation and experiences with IRAP will facilitate improving the program.

This survey is limited to landowners who once had or currently have private property enrolled in the IRAP at any point since 2011. Please take a few minutes to complete the enclosed questionnaire. A postage paid envelope is provided for returning the questionnaire to us.

**Even if you are no longer participating in IRAP, we ask that you please take a few minutes to complete the portions of the questionnaire that pertain to you.**

If you have questions regarding this study, please call (217) 244-5121.

Thank you for your time and helping with this important study.

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

# Public Access on Private Property with IL Recreational Access Program



*IRAP is funded by the NRCS Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program. IRAP leases private land for semi-controlled public access activities*

Activity	Who Can Apply	How	When to Apply	IRAP Activity Date	Additional Information
Youth TURKEY Hunting	Licensed youth hunters age 17 and under	Complete online application	Online application available November 20	Youth Spring Turkey Season	Must hunt with a non-hunting adult
Spring TURKEY Season Segments 3 & 4	Any licensed hunter	Complete online application	Online application available November 20	North/South 3rd and 4th spring season	
SPORTFISHING	Any licensed angler	Register and reserve a site online	Online reservations available March 25	April 1—September 30 Friday—Monday	No boats
SQUIRREL Hunting	Any licensed hunter	Register and reserve a site online	Online reservations available July 25	August 1—September 15	Up to 4 in hunting group
Youth Shotgun DEER hunting	Licensed youth hunters age 17 and under	Complete online application	Online application available July 1	Second 3-day weekend in October	Must hunt with a non-hunting adult
Archery DEER Hunting	Any licensed hunter	Complete online application	Online application available July 1	Month of October and December 16-31	
WATERFOWL Hunting	Any licensed hunter	Complete application	Application available August 15	November 1– December 31	Blinds onsite; Dogs allowed; up to 4 in hunting group
UPLAND GAME Hunting	Any licensed hunter	Complete application	Application available October 1	2-day weekend hunts; last 3 weekends in December	Dogs allowed; Up to 4 in hunting group
RABBIT Hunting	Any licensed hunter	Register and reserve a site online	Online reservations available November 25	December 10-31	Dogs Allowed; up to 4 in hunting group

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## ILLINOIS NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY

Prairie Research Institute  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

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March 08, 2022

Dear landowner,

You are one of a select group of Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP) landowners asked to provide information about your opinions and experiences with IRAP during your enrollment. The information you and other selected landowners furnish our Illinois Department of Natural Resources land managers is vital. Your evaluation and experiences with IRAP will facilitate improving the program.

This survey is limited to landowners who once had or currently have private property enrolled in the IRAP at any point since 2011. Please take a few minutes to complete the enclosed questionnaire. A postage paid envelope is provided for returning the questionnaire to us.

**Even if you are no longer participating in IRAP, we ask that you please take a few minutes to complete the portions of the questionnaire that pertain to you.**

If you have questions regarding this study, please call (217) 244-5121.

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Sincerely,

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SPORTFISHING	Any licensed angler	Register and reserve a site online	Online reservations available March 25	April 1—September 30 Friday—Monday	No boats
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Archery DEER Hunting	Any licensed hunter	Complete online application	Online application available July 1	Month of October and December 16-31	
WATERFOWL Hunting	Any licensed hunter	Complete application	Application available August 15	November 1– December 31	Blinds onsite; Dogs allowed; up to 4 in hunting group
UPLAND GAME Hunting	Any licensed hunter	Complete application	Application available October 1	2-day weekend hunts; last 3 weekends in December	Dogs allowed; Up to 4 in hunting group
RABBIT Hunting	Any licensed hunter	Register and reserve a site online	Online reservations available November 25	December 10-31	Dogs Allowed; up to 4 in hunting group

IRAP is available to Illinois residents and non-residents. A participant must have an IRAP site permit and reservation prior to using any site. Participants must follow all laws and obtain necessary permits and licenses as outlined in the Illinois Digest of Hunting and Trapping and Fishing Regulations. Additional information can be found at: <https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/conservation/IRAP> or by calling 217-782-0137



Appendix B.4: IRAP Landowner Postcard

Dear Illinois Landowner,

Recently you were mailed a questionnaire about your experiences with the Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP). We have not yet received your response. **If you have already returned the questionnaire, we thank you. If you have not returned the questionnaire, please do so as soon as possible. Your input is very important!**

Your name and address will be deleted from our mailing list when your questionnaire is received. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

**The Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP)**  
**Statewide Hunter/Recreationist Survey**



Illinois Department of Natural Resources

Division of Private Lands  
and

Illinois Natural History Survey



ILLINOIS NATURAL  
HISTORY SURVEY  
PRAIRIE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

**The Illinois Department of Natural Resources is interested in Illinois hunter/recreationist opinions of the Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP). Please take 15 minutes of your time to complete this questionnaire. Your responses will tell us more about hunter/recreationist opinions of IRAP and important issues concerning the IRAP program in Illinois.**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!**

All of your responses will be kept confidential.

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

Disclosure of information is voluntary.

**Section 1. Outdoor recreation in Illinois.** The following questions are important to help understand more about you and your opinions of outdoor recreation activities in Illinois. All responses are kept confidential.

1. On which type of land do you hunt/recreate **most often**?

- My own private property                       Public property (State, Federal, and other public lands)  
 IRAP (public access) land                       Private property **not** owned by me  
 Private outfitter property                       Private property owned by my family

2. Please rate your level of importance for each of the following activities by circling the number that best matches your response.

	Not at all Important	Slightly Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	I do not do this activity
Hunting	1	2	3	4	5
Hiking	1	2	3	4	5
Birding	1	2	3	4	5
Fishing	1	2	3	4	5
Camping	1	2	3	4	5
Boating	1	2	3	4	5

3. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements by circling the response that best matches your opinion.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree
It is difficult to find places to hunt/recreate in Illinois.	1	2	3	4	5
It is difficult to gain access to private properties for hunting/recreation activities in Illinois.	1	2	3	4	5
Landowners have become less willing to grant permission to hunt/recreate on private land.	1	2	3	4	5
It has become easy to establish and maintain private landowner contacts in Illinois.	1	2	3	4	5
Some type of hunter/recreation program is needed to improve access to private land in Illinois.	1	2	3	4	5
I prefer to access private land over public land for outdoor recreation in Illinois.	1	2	3	4	5
I do not have time to meet with private landowners to obtain access to private land.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel comfortable approaching private landowners to obtain access to private land.	1	2	3	4	5
I have the ability to approach private landowners and obtain access to private lands.	1	2	3	4	5
I have been unsuccessful in my attempts to gain private land access in Illinois.	1	2	3	4	5
Public land for hunting/recreation in Illinois is too crowded.	1	2	3	4	5

**Section 2. Hunting in Illinois.** The following questions are important to learn more about your intentions for participating in IRAP and plans for future hunting activities in Illinois.

1. Would you consider yourself a hunter?  Yes  No (If “No,” please go to question 15)
2. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding your attitudes toward hunting.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
Hunting is one of the most important activities in my life.	1	2	3	4	5
I spend a lot of time in the off-season planning for hunting.	1	2	3	4	5
I plan vacation time around hunting seasons.	1	2	3	4	5
Hunting determines much of my lifestyle.	1	2	3	4	5
I spend a lot of time before the season scouting the area I will hunt.	1	2	3	4	5
I would rather hunt than do any other recreation.	1	2	3	4	5

3. Did you hunt in Illinois during the 2019-20 hunting seasons?  Yes  No
- 3a. If no, what was the last year you hunted in Illinois?  Year
4. How many **years** have you hunted?  Years
5. How many **years** have you hunted in Illinois?  Years
6. Who do you hunt with? (Please select all that apply)
- I hunt by myself  Family  Friends  Mentor  IRAP Hunter(s)
7. Which type(s) of game do you hunt? (Please select all that apply)
- Dove  Waterfowl (ducks, geese)  Small game (rabbit, squirrel)
- Predators (coyote, fox, raccoon)  Deer  Turkey
- Upland birds (pheasant, quail)
8. On average, how far do you travel to hunt in Illinois?
- <1 mile  1-25 miles  26-50 miles  51-75 miles  76-100 miles  >100 miles
9. Which of the following game species do you hunt **less** now than you did 5 years ago? (Please select all that apply)
- None  Small game  Geese  Ducks
- Turkey (Spring)  Turkey (Fall)  Furbearers  Doves
- Deer (Shotgun)  Deer (Muzzleloader)  Deer (Archery)
- Other (Please identify): \_\_\_\_\_
- 9a. **If your hunting effort decreased**, which of the following has it been due to? (Please select all that apply)
- Lack of time  Lack of interest  Lack of financial resources
- No one to hunt with  Too many regulations  Seasons too short
- No land to hunt on  Not enough game  Health problems
- Too much equipment needed  COVID 19 restrictions  Interest in other recreation
- Other (Please identify): \_\_\_\_\_

10. Which of the following game species do you hunt **more** now than you did 5 years ago? (Please select all that apply)

- None                       Small game                       Geese                       Ducks  
 Turkey (Spring)                       Turkey (Fall)                       Furbearers                       Doves  
 Deer (Shotgun)                       Deer (Muzzleloader)                       Deer (Archery)  
 Other (Please identify): \_\_\_\_\_

10a. **If your hunting effort increased**, which of the following has it been due to? (Please select all that apply)

- Increased free time                       More game                       Better health/fitness  
 Greater financial resources                       More hunting partners                       New type of hunting  
 Better seasons/regulations                       Availability of land to hunt                       Better equipment  
 Increased interest                       COVID 19 restrictions                       I found a mentor  
 Reintroduced to hunting                       Other (Please identify): \_\_\_\_\_

11. What do you feel is the **single greatest problem** that contributes to the decline in hunting? (Please select only **one**)

- Not enough land                       Declining game species  
 Gun control                       Too many hunters on public land  
 Not enough time                       Competing recreation uses of public land  
 Lack of mentoring for new hunters                       Other (Please identify): \_\_\_\_\_

12. Have you ever been denied access to private land in Illinois when asking permission to hunt?

- Yes                       No (If "No," please go to question 13)

12a. How often would you say that you have been denied access for hunting private land in Illinois?

Never	Almost never	Infrequently	Half the time	Frequently	Almost always	Always
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

12b. Which of the following reasons best describe why you believe you were denied permission to hunt private land in Illinois? (Please select all that apply)

- Previous bad experience with hunters                       Too many people were asking to hunt  
 Safety concerns                       Liability concerns  
 Livestock on the property                       Landowner(s) didn't like hunting/hunters  
 Other hunters had permission                       No one was allowed to hunt the property  
 Other (Please identify): \_\_\_\_\_

13. Have you ever paid a property owner to hunt private land in Illinois?     Yes     No

14. Have you ever taken a youth (less than 18 years old) turkey hunting during an **Illinois Youth Turkey Hunt**?

- Yes                       No (If "No," please go to question 15)

14a. How much do you support allowing **Illinois youth turkey hunters** to use their **unused turkey permit** in any of the five spring turkey seasons until they are able to fill it?

Do Not Support At All	Slightly Support	Somewhat Support	Moderately Support	Extremely Support
1	2	3	4	5

15. Do you have friends or family that would be interested in attending if IDNR had a mentored hunting program for youth and beginning hunters?

Yes  No

16. Please indicate your level of interest with the following by circling the number that best matches your interest level

	Not at all Interested	Slightly Interested	Somewhat Interested	Very Interested	Extremely Interested
IDNR offering a mentored hunting program for youth.	1	2	3	4	5
IDNR offering a mentored hunting program for new/beginning hunters.	1	2	3	4	5
Enroll in a mentor program as a new hunter.	1	2	3	4	5
Participating in a mentor program as a mentor	1	2	3	4	5
Encouraging friends to enroll as new hunters in a mentor program	1	2	3	4	5
Encouraging friends to participate as a mentor	1	2	3	4	5

17. Do you know a **female** family member or friend who has expressed interest in hunting but is uncomfortable trying it on their own?  Yes  No

**Section 2. The Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP)** leases private property throughout Illinois for semi-controlled public access for a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities. More information on IRAP can be found at <https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/conservation/IRAP>

1. Before this survey, were you aware of the Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP)?

Yes  No (If "No," please go to question 3)

1a. If "Yes," how did you become aware of IRAP? (Please select all that apply)

Illinois DNR website  National Wild Turkey Federation  Social Media  
 An IRAP landowner  An IRAP participant  Pheasants Forever  
 Friend  Newspaper/Magazine article  
 Other (Please identify): \_\_\_\_\_

2. Have you ever applied to access IRAP property (ies)?

Yes, I applied and was accepted  
 Yes, I applied and was rejected  
 No I have never applied to IRAP

2a. If "rejected," did you **reapply** to participate in the same IRAP activity the next year?  Yes  No

3. Please indicate how likely you are to do the following by circling the response that best matches your opinion.

	Extremely Unlikely	Unlikely	Neither	Likely	Extremely Likely
How likely are you to participate in IRAP?	1	2	3	4	5
How likely are you to seek permission to hunt private property not enrolled in IRAP?	1	2	3	4	5
How likely are you to try IRAP sites that are new to you?	1	2	3	4	5
How likely are you to try sites newly enrolled into the IRAP program?	1	2	3	4	5
How likely are you to recommend participating in IRAP to a friend?	1	2	3	4	5

3a. **If your participation in IRAP is likely**, which IRAP activities are you interested in? (Select all that apply)

- Upland Game Hunting                       Small Game Hunting                       Sport Fishing  
 Youth Shotgun Deer Hunting                       Archery Deer Hunting                       Waterfowl Hunting  
 Spring Youth Turkey Hunting                       Spring Turkey Hunting seasons 3 & 4

3b. **If your participation in IRAP is likely**, how often do you plan on hunting on IRAP sites in Illinois?

Much Less Often	Less Often	About the Same	More Often	Much More Often
1	2	3	4	5

3c. **If your participation in IRAP is unlikely**, which reason(s) have influenced your decision? (Please select all that apply)

- Lack of free time                       Lack of hunting partners                       Health problems  
 Unable to be drawn for IRAP                       More places to hunt                       Too expensive  
 Not enough IRAP activities                       Poor economy                       Lack of interest  
 Too many regulations                       Regulations are too complicated                       Not enough wildlife  
 Not enough IRAP properties                       Own my own property  
 Other (Please explain): \_\_\_\_\_

4. Please give your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements concerning IRAP.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree
I want to participate in IRAP	1	2	3	4	5
I want to participate in IRAP because I want to try hunting for the first time.	1	2	3	4	5
I want to participate in IRAP to find private land access for outdoor activities in Illinois.	1	2	3	4	5
I want to participate in IRAP to hunt/recreate new places in Illinois.	1	2	3	4	5
I want to participate in IRAP to spend time with my family	1	2	3	4	5

**Section 4. Background information.** The following questions are important to help understand more about IRAP recreation participants and your outdoor recreational activities in Illinois. All responses are kept confidential.

1. Please give your age. \_\_\_\_\_ Years
2. What is your gender? \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female
3. How long have you lived in Illinois? \_\_\_\_\_ Years
4. Do you have children <18 living at home? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No (If “No,” please go to question 5)
  - 4a. If “Yes,” in which outdoor activities do your children participate? (Please select all that apply)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Hunting \_\_\_\_\_ Fishing \_\_\_\_\_ Camping \_\_\_\_\_ Hiking \_\_\_\_\_ Birding  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other (Please identify): \_\_\_\_\_
5. Do you have access to the Internet in your home? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No
  - 5a. If yes is it high speed \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No
6. Which of the following best describes where you live now? (Please select one)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Rural area \_\_\_\_\_ Small town (<5,000) \_\_\_\_\_ Small city (5,000-49,999)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Suburb of medium/large city \_\_\_\_\_ Medium city (50,000-500,000) \_\_\_\_\_ Large city (>500,000)
7. What is your approximate total (gross) **household** income before taxes?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Less than \$15,000 \_\_\_\_\_ \$15,000 to \$29,999 \_\_\_\_\_ \$30,000 to \$44,999  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$45,000 to \$59,999 \_\_\_\_\_ \$60,000 to \$74,999 \_\_\_\_\_ \$75,000 to \$89,999  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$90,000 or more
8. What is your highest level of education?  
\_\_\_\_\_ High school or GED \_\_\_\_\_ Bachelor’s degree  
\_\_\_\_\_ Technical school \_\_\_\_\_ Master’s degree or higher  
\_\_\_\_\_ Associates degree



**Comments:**

Funded by the United States Department of Agriculture,  
Voluntary Public Access Habitat Improvement Program

**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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January 28, 2022

Dear Illinois hunter/recreationist,

The Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP) focuses on finding places and activities for youth and families to experience the outdoors through hunting and fishing. Enrolled private properties are leased by Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), have comprehensive habitat/forestry management plans, and open to the public for some recreational activities. Since the program's inception in 2011, over 25,000 acres have been enrolled, fifteen thousand acres of habitat projects have been implemented! Illinois DNR is looking to expand the IRAP program across the state, especially in underserved areas.

You are one of a select group of Illinois hunters/recreationists asked to provide information about your outdoor recreational activities and your opinions about the Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP). The information you and other selected hunters/recreationists furnish our Illinois DNR program managers is vital for learning about outdoor recreation in Illinois and gauging hunter/recreationist interest in IRAP.

This survey is limited to resident hunters and recreationists in Illinois. Please take a few minutes to complete the enclosed questionnaire. A stamped envelope is provided for returning the questionnaire to us.

If you have questions regarding this study, please call us at (217) 244-5121.

Thank you for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

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

Craig A. Miller  
Human Dimensions Research Program



Funded by your purchase of hunting & shooting equipment.  
**NO Illinois Tax Dollars** are used for this study.

# Public Access on Private Property with IL Recreational Access Program



*IRAP is funded by the NRCS Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program. IRAP leases private land for semi-controlled public access activities*

Activity	Who Can Apply	How	When to Apply	IRAP Activity Date	Additional Information
Youth TURKEY Hunting	Licensed youth hunters age 17 and under	Complete online application	Online application available November 20	Youth Spring Turkey Season	Must hunt with a non-hunting adult
Spring TURKEY Season Segments 3 & 4	Any licensed hunter	Complete online application	Online application available November 20	North/South 3rd and 4th spring season	
SPORTFISHING	Any licensed angler	Register and reserve a site online	Online reservations available March 25	April 1—September 30 Friday—Monday	No boats
SQUIRREL Hunting	Any licensed hunter	Register and reserve a site online	Online reservations available July 25	August 1—September 15	Up to 4 in hunting group
Youth Shotgun DEER hunting	Licensed youth hunters age 17 and under	Complete online application	Online application available July 1	Second 3-day weekend in October	Must hunt with a non-hunting adult
Archery DEER Hunting	Any licensed hunter	Complete online application	Online application available July 1	Month of October and December 16-31	
WATERFOWL Hunting	Any licensed hunter	Complete application	Application available August 15	November 1– December 31	Blinds onsite; Dogs allowed; up to 4 in hunting group
UPLAND GAME Hunting	Any licensed hunter	Complete application	Application available October 1	2-day weekend hunts; last 3 weekends in December	Dogs allowed; Up to 4 in hunting group
RABBIT Hunting	Any licensed hunter	Register and reserve a site online	Online reservations available November 25	December 10-31	Dogs Allowed; up to 4 in hunting group

IRAP is available to Illinois residents and non-residents. A participant must have an IRAP site permit and reservation prior to using any site. Participants must follow all laws and obtain necessary permits and licenses as outlined in the Illinois Digest of Hunting and Trapping and Fishing Regulations. Additional information can be found at: <https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/conservation/IRAP> or by calling 217-782-0137



## ILLINOIS NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY

Prairie Research Institute  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

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March 08, 2022

Dear Illinois hunter/recreationist,

The Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP) focuses on finding places and activities for youth and families to experience the outdoors through hunting and fishing. Enrolled private properties are leased by Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), have comprehensive habitat/forestry management plans, and open to the public for some recreational activities. Since the program's inception in 2011, over 25,000 acres have been enrolled, fifteen thousand acres of habitat projects have been implemented! Illinois DNR is looking to expand the IRAP program across the state, especially in underserved areas.

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Craig A. Miller  
Human Dimensions Research Program



Funded by your purchase of hunting & shooting equipment.  
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Activity	Who Can Apply	How	When to Apply	IRAP Activity Date	Additional Information
Youth TURKEY Hunting	Licensed youth hunters age 17 and under	Complete online application	Online application available November 20	Youth Spring Turkey Season	Must hunt with a non-hunting adult
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IRAP is available to Illinois residents and non-residents. A participant must have an IRAP site permit and reservation prior to using any site. Participants must follow all laws and obtain necessary permits and licenses as outlined in the Illinois Digest of Hunting and Trapping and Fishing Regulations. Additional information can be found at: <https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/conservation/IRAP> or by calling 217-782-0137

Appendix C.4: Illinois Statewide Recreationist Postcard

Dear Illinois Hunter/Recreationist,

Recently you were mailed a questionnaire about your outdoor recreational activities and the Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP). We have not yet received your response. **If you have already returned the questionnaire, we thank you. If you have not returned the questionnaire, please do so as soon as possible. Your input is very important!**

Your name and address will be deleted from our mailing list when your questionnaire is received. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

# The Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP)

## Statewide Landowner Survey



Illinois Department of Natural Resources  
Division of Private Lands  
and  
Illinois Natural History Survey

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

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources is interested in learning about land use in Illinois and landowners' opinions about the Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP). Please take 15 minutes of your time to complete this questionnaire. Your responses will tell us more about landowner opinions of IRAP and future participation in the program. Please note that no one from the IDNR or IRAP program will call or solicit you about enrolling your property into the IRAP program. This survey is necessary for continuing and improving the IRAP program.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!**

All of your responses will be kept confidential.

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

Disclosure of information is voluntary.

**Section 1. About your property.** The following questions are important to land managers at the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). Your input will help us learn more about land-use, conservation practices, and habitat restoration currently used in Illinois. All responses are kept confidential.

1. About how many acres do you own in Illinois? \_\_\_\_\_ Acres
2. How many parcels of land do you own in Illinois? \_\_\_\_\_ Parcels
3. Which land-cover type(s) best describe your land in Illinois? (Please select all that apply)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Row crop(s)      \_\_\_\_\_ Forest      \_\_\_\_\_ Pasture      \_\_\_\_\_ Ponds  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Native grass      \_\_\_\_\_ Wildlife food plot      \_\_\_\_\_ Orchard      \_\_\_\_\_ River access
4. Is farming your primary source of income? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes      \_\_\_\_\_ No
5. Do you have livestock on your property? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes      \_\_\_\_\_ No
6. Do you currently perform any conservation management practices on your property?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Yes      \_\_\_\_\_ No (If "No," please go to question 7)

6a. If "Yes," please select all of the management practices that apply.

- |  |                                 |                                      |
|--|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| _____ Grassed waterways                | _____ Stream buffers            | _____ Filter strips                  |
| _____ Shallow water areas for wildlife | _____ Shelterbelt establishment | _____ Contour grass strips           |
| _____ Wildlife food plots              | _____ Native grass plantings    | _____ Cover crop                     |
| _____ Wetland restoration              | _____ Tree plantings            | _____ Invasive plant species removal |
| _____ Other: _____                     |                                 |                                      |

7. In which of the following conservation programs listed below have you participated? Please give your answer by circling the number that best matches your response.

	Never participated	Participated in the past, but not now	Currently participate, but will not renew	Currently participate and will renew
Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)	1	2	3	4
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)	1	2	3	4
Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)	1	2	3	4
Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)	1	2	3	4
Farmable Wetlands Program (FWP)	1	2	3	4
State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)	1	2	3	4
Source Water Protection Program (SWPP)	1	2	3	4
Wetland Reserve Program (WRP)	1	2	3	4
Other Conservation Programs	1	2	3	4

8. **If you are enrolled in conservation programs**, how many acres do you currently have enrolled in each program? (If you do not participate, please go to question 10)

\_\_\_\_\_ Acres      Program (Please list): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Acres      Program (Please list): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Acres      Program (Please list): \_\_\_\_\_



9. If you were not receiving payment (cost-share) for participating in the conservation programs listed above or other similar programs, would you continue to engage in the conservation practices?

Definitely No	Probably No	Not Sure	Probably Yes	Definitely Yes
1	2	3	4	5

10. Please rate your level of importance for the following concepts by circling the response that best matches your opinion.

	Extremely Unimportant	Unimportant	Neither	Important	Extremely Important
Protecting native plant species on my land	1	2	3	4	5
Preserving native plant species on my land	1	2	3	4	5
Restoring native habitats on my land	1	2	3	4	5
Improving the quality of habitat on my land for game species	1	2	3	4	5
Improving quality of habitat on my land for non-game species	1	2	3	4	5
Increasing the amount habit on my land for game species	1	2	3	4	5
Increasing the amount of habitat on my land for non-game species	1	2	3	4	5

11. Please give your level of interest for each of the following statements by circling the response that best matches your opinion.

	Extremely Uninterested	Uninterested	Neither	Interested	Extremely Interested
Having a habitat management plan implemented on your property.	1	2	3	4	5
Enrolling your property into a conservation management program(s).	1	2	3	4	5
Improving habitat conditions on your property to benefit wildlife.	1	2	3	4	5
Receiving financial incentives for conservation management practices performed on your property.	1	2	3	4	5

**Section 2. Private land hunting in Illinois.** The following questions are important to learn more about hunting on private land in Illinois. All responses are kept confidential.

1. Are you aware that landowners who provide hunters **free** access to their property have their liability removed under Illinois Recreational Land Use law?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes      \_\_\_\_\_ No

2. Do you currently carry an umbrella liability insurance coverage on your property for “others” who you allow to hunt/recreate on your property?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes      \_\_\_\_\_ No      \_\_\_\_\_ I do not allow others to recreate on my property

3. Please give your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements by circling the response that best matches your opinion.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree
It is easy to find places to hunt/recreate in Illinois.	1	2	3	4	5
It is difficult to gain access to private land for hunting/recreation activities in Illinois.	1	2	3	4	5
Landowners have become less willing to grant permission to hunt/recreate on private land in Illinois.	1	2	3	4	5
It has become less difficult to establish and maintain private landowner contacts in Illinois.	1	2	3	4	5
Some type of hunter/recreation program is needed to improve access to private land in Illinois.	1	2	3	4	5

4. Have you ever denied access to hunters asking for permission to hunt your property?

Yes (If "Yes," please go to questions 4a and 4b)     No (If "No," please go to question 5)

4a. Which of the following reasons best describe why you have denied hunters permission to hunt on your land? (Please select all that apply)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hunters were inconsiderate of my land | <input type="checkbox"/> I got tired of people asking to hunt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concerns for my family's safety       | <input type="checkbox"/> Liability                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Damage to property/equipment          | <input type="checkbox"/> Injury to livestock                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I don't like hunting/hunters          | <input type="checkbox"/> I have other hunting arrangements    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I keep it for myself/family/friends   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please identify): _____       |

4b. How often would you say that you deny hunting access to your property for hunting?

Never	Rarely	Infrequently	Sometimes	Frequently	Often	Always
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. Have you **ever allowed hunting** on your property? (Please select only one)

Yes, and I still do     Yes, but not anymore     No (If "No," please go to Section 3)

6. About how many persons per year were allowed to hunt your property? (Please select only one)

1-5     6-10     11-15     >15     I don't know

7. Who was allowed to hunt the property? (Please select all that apply)

- Me and/or immediate family
- I leased hunting rights to the property
- Extended family, friends, and neighbors
- Hunters who requested permission
- The property was open to anyone who wanted to hunt and they did **not** have to ask for permission

8. What do you consider to be the benefits of having hunters on your property? (Please select all that apply)

- Remove nuisance wildlife                       Source of income  
 Provide me with wild game                       Source of goods and services  
 Discourage trespassers                       Other (Please identify): \_\_\_\_\_

9. What type(s) of game was hunted on your property? (Please select all that apply)

- Dove                       Waterfowl (ducks, geese)                       Small game (rabbit, squirrel)  
 Predators (coyote, fox, raccoon)                       Deer                       Turkey  
 Upland birds (pheasant, quail)                       I don't know

10. How often have you needed to contact an Illinois DNR Conservation Officer or other law enforcement to address problems with hunters **who had permission** to use your property? (Please select only one)

Never	Once	Infrequently (Once every few years)	Frequently (Once a year)	Always (Multiple time a year)
1	2	3	4	5

11. How often have you needed to contact an Illinois DNR Conservation Officer or other law enforcement to address problems with hunters who **did not have permission** to use your property? (Please select only one)

Never	Once	Infrequently (Once every few years)	Frequently (Once a year)	Always (Multiple time a year)
1	2	3	4	5

12. How would you rate your satisfaction with the hunters who have hunted your property?

Extremely Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither	Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied
1	2	3	4	5

13. Please give your level of interest for each of the following statements by circling the response that best matches your opinion.

	Extremely Uninterested	Uninterested	Neither	Interested	Extremely Interested
Having controlled recreational activities on your property.	1	2	3	4	5
Providing outdoor recreational opportunities to the public on your property.	1	2	3	4	5
Providing hunting opportunities to new youth and adult hunters.	1	2	3	4	5
Having personal liability protection for activities performed on your property.	1	2	3	4	5

**Section 3. The Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP)** leases private property throughout Illinois for public hunting and fishing activities using a reservation system. A detailed explanation of the program is in the cover letter. Please answer the following questions about the IRAP program to help land managers at IDNR understand landowners' thoughts about IRAP.

1. Before this survey, were you aware of the Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP)?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes (If "Yes," please go to question 1a)      \_\_\_\_\_ No (If "No," please go to question 2)

1a. How did you become aware of IRAP? (Please select all that apply)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Illinois DNR website                      \_\_\_\_\_ National Wild Turkey Federation                      \_\_\_\_\_ Social Media  
 \_\_\_\_\_ An IRAP landowner                      \_\_\_\_\_ An IRAP participant                      \_\_\_\_\_ Pheasants Forever  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Friend                      \_\_\_\_\_ Newspaper/Magazine article  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Other (Please identify): \_\_\_\_\_

2. Please give your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements by circling the response that best matches your opinion.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree
IRAP is needed to improve hunter/recreation access to private lands in Illinois.	1	2	3	4	5
IRAP is beneficial for Illinois.	1	2	3	4	5
IRAP causes more hunters/recreationists to lease places for themselves.	1	2	3	4	5
IRAP is beneficial to me personally.	1	2	3	4	5
IRAP decreases the number of hunters that are leaving the sport.	1	2	3	4	5
IRAP creates new opportunities to hunt/recreate on private lands in Illinois.	1	2	3	4	5
IRAP has had no impact on recruiting and retaining hunters/recreationists in Illinois.	1	2	3	4	5
When landowners enroll in IRAP, hunters lose access to sites.	1	2	3	4	5
IRAP provides extra income for landowners.	1	2	3	4	5
Allows me to have control who has access to my land	1	2	3	4	5
I support Illinois having IRAP	1	2	3	4	5

3. How likely are you to **enroll your property in IRAP?**

Extremely Unlikely	Unlikely	Neither	Likely	Extremely Likely
1	2	3	4	5

3a. **If enrolling in IRAP is likely**, which IRAP activities would you be interested in allowing on your property?  
(Please select all that apply)

Spring Youth Turkey Hunting

Small Game Hunting

Spring Turkey Hunting seasons 3 & 4

Archery Deer Hunting

Upland Game Hunting

Youth Shotgun Deer Hunting

Sport Fishing

Waterfowl Hunting

3b. **If enrolling in IRAP is unlikely**, what reason(s) have influenced your decision? (Please select all that apply)

My land is currently leased for hunting purposes

My land is currently leased for agricultural/farming purposes

I do not want hunters/recreationists that I do not know on my property

I do not think IRAP works as described

I do not agree with state agencies leasing land for public use

My family and I recreate on my land

There is enough public land available for hunters/recreationists in Illinois

Other (Please identify): \_\_\_\_\_

3c. **If enrolling in IRAP is unlikely**, which of the following concerns do you have about enrolling in IRAP?  
(Please select all that apply)

Concerns about the habitat work performed on my property

Concerns about the behavior of hunters/recreationists on my property

Concerns about the use and/or possible damage to my personal property

Concerns for the safety of my family, livestock, pets, and/or hunters/recreationists on my property

Concerns about personal liability in the event of an accident

Other (Please identify): \_\_\_\_\_

4. How likely are you to **recommend to a friend** that they enroll their land in IRAP?

Extremely Unlikely

Unlikely

Neither

Likely

Extremely Likely

1

2

3

4

5

**Section 4. Background information.** The following questions about yourself are important to help us understand more about private landowners in Illinois. All responses are kept confidential.

1. Please give your age. \_\_\_\_\_ Years

2. What is your gender?       Male       Female
3. For private property you own, who has the primary responsibility for making decisions? (Please select all that apply)
- I am the sole decision-maker
- I share decision-making with my spouse
- I share decision-making with my relatives
- I share decision-making with non-family business partners
4. What county(ies) is/are your private property(ies) located in?
- \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_
5. Approximately what percentage of your total net household income is generated from the private property that you own? (Please select only one)
- 0 to 10%       11% to 25%       26% to 50%       51% to 75%       76% to 100%
6. What is your highest level of education?
- High school or GED       Bachelor's degree
- Technical school       Master's degree or higher
- Associates degree

**Comments:**

Funded by the United States Department of Agriculture,  
Voluntary Public Access Habitat Improvement Program

**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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January 28, 2022

Dear landowner,

The Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP) focuses on finding places and activities for youth and families to experience the outdoors through hunting and fishing. Enrolled private properties are leased by Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), have comprehensive habitat/forestry management plans, and open to the public for some recreational activities. Since the program's inception in 2011, over 25,000 acres have been enrolled, fifteen thousand acres of habitat projects have been implemented! Illinois DNR is looking to expand the IRAP program across the state, especially in underserved areas.

You are one of a select group of Illinois landowners asked to provide information about your private land, land use activities, and your opinions about the Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP). The information you and other selected landowners furnish our Illinois DNR program managers is vital for learning about private land conservation management practices in Illinois and gauging landowner interest in IRAP.

This survey is limited to private landowners in Illinois. Please take a few minutes to complete the enclosed questionnaire. A stamped envelope is provided for returning the questionnaire to us.

If you have questions regarding this study, please call us at (217) 244-5121.

Thank you for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

Craig A. Miller  
Human Dimensions Research Program

# Public Access on Private Property with IL Recreational Access Program



*IRAP is funded by the NRCS Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program. IRAP leases private land for semi-controlled public access activities*

Activity	Who Can Apply	How	When to Apply	IRAP Activity Date	Additional Information
Youth TURKEY Hunting	Licensed youth hunters age 17 and under	Complete online application	Online application available November 20	Youth Spring Turkey Season	Must hunt with a non-hunting adult
Spring TURKEY Season Segments 3 & 4	Any licensed hunter	Complete online application	Online application available November 20	North/South 3rd and 4th spring season	
SPORTFISHING	Any licensed angler	Register and reserve a site online	Online reservations available March 25	April 1—September 30 Friday—Monday	No boats
SQUIRREL Hunting	Any licensed hunter	Register and reserve a site online	Online reservations available July 25	August 1—September 15	Up to 4 in hunting group
Youth Shotgun DEER hunting	Licensed youth hunters age 17 and under	Complete online application	Online application available July 1	Second 3-day weekend in October	Must hunt with a non-hunting adult
Archery DEER Hunting	Any licensed hunter	Complete online application	Online application available July 1	Month of October and December 16-31	
WATERFOWL Hunting	Any licensed hunter	Complete application	Application available August 15	November 1– December 31	Blinds onsite; Dogs allowed; up to 4 in hunting group
UPLAND GAME Hunting	Any licensed hunter	Complete application	Application available October 1	2-day weekend hunts; last 3 weekends in December	Dogs allowed; Up to 4 in hunting group
RABBIT Hunting	Any licensed hunter	Register and reserve a site online	Online reservations available November 25	December 10-31	Dogs Allowed; up to 4 in hunting group

IRAP is available to Illinois residents and non-residents. A participant must have an IRAP site permit and reservation prior to using any site. Participants must follow all laws and obtain necessary permits and licenses as outlined in the Illinois Digest of Hunting and Trapping and Fishing Regulations. Additional information can be found at: <https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/conservation/IRAP> or by calling 217-782-0137





## ILLINOIS NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY

Prairie Research Institute  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

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March 08, 2022

Dear landowner,

The Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP) focuses on finding places and activities for youth and families to experience the outdoors through hunting and fishing. Enrolled private properties are leased by Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), have comprehensive habitat/forestry management plans, and open to the public for some recreational activities. Since the program's inception in 2011, over 25,000 acres have been enrolled, fifteen thousand acres of habitat projects have been implemented! Illinois DNR is looking to expand the IRAP program across the state, especially in underserved areas.

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If you have questions regarding this study, please call us at (217) 244-5121.

Thank you for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

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

Craig A. Miller  
Human Dimensions Research Program

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Appendix D.4: Illinois Statewide Landowner Postcard

Dear Illinois Landowner,

Recently you were mailed a questionnaire about your land use activities, management practices, and the Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP). We have not yet received your response. **If you have already returned the questionnaire, we thank you. If you have not returned the questionnaire, please do so as soon as possible. Your input is very important!**

Your name and address will be deleted from our mailing list when your questionnaire is received. Thank you for your time and cooperation.