

Access and Habitat Program Hunter Use & Awareness Survey

Results of a Statewide Survey of Oregon's Hunters

July 1-16, 2004

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I. INTRODUCTION

This document reports a summary of results of a survey commissioned by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (subsequently “ODFW”) of licensed hunters in Oregon. The survey was conducted by the Oregon Survey Research Laboratory (OSRL) between July 1st and July 16th 2004.

Questions were developed collaboratively between principal investigator Joel Bloom and other OSRL staff, and ODFW staff including Eric Rickerson, Steve Cherry, and Nick Myatt. Questions were carefully designed to enable ODFW to measure the awareness, perceptions, and experiences of Oregon’s hunters with hunting on private property made available for public hunting through the Department’s Access and Habitat Program.

II. METHODOLOGY

- The University of Oregon Survey Research Laboratory completed 504 anonymous telephone interviews with adult Oregonians between July 1st and July 16th 2004.
- ODFW provided OSRL with a complete list of licensed hunters in the state of Oregon. After deleting minors and hunters who are not Oregon residents, the list amounted to just over 200,000 adult Oregonians. From this list we randomly selected 1,000 records to serve as our sample.
- For the total sample, the CASRO-type response rate was 71% and the refusal rate was 2%.¹
- Based on the overall sample size of 504, the margin of error for a variable with a 50-50 proportional split is 4.4 percentage points, at the 95% confidence level. This means readers can be 95% sure that the true population figure is between 45.6% and 54.4% (i.e., $50\% \pm 4.4$ percentage points). For a variable with a 90-10 proportional split the margin of error is 2.6 percentage points (i.e., $90\% \pm 2.6$ percentage points). Because some groups of questions only were asked of respondents who have hunted on Access and Habitat sites, these respondents constitute a smaller subsample with higher margins of error, as reported in the tables here.
- To assess the margin of error for demographic subgroups contained in the banner tables (e.g., women or men, different age groups or other groupings), see: <http://osrl.uoregon.edu/papers/sampler/>

¹ See the accompanying “How OSRL Calculates Response Rates and Refusal Rates” for a detailed description of how response and refusal rates are calculated.

III. FINDINGS

Awareness of Access and Habitat

Respondents were first asked whether they have heard of the Access and Habitat Program:

The survey is about the Department's Access and Habitat Program, in which private landowners open some of their land for hunting. Have you heard of this program?

Just over half of the sample, or 51%, answered that they had, while 49% said they had not (see Table 1 below). This is evidence both of high levels of awareness of the program and of the fact that a great many hunters in Oregon still do not know of it, representing an opportunity to expand awareness of the program.

	% Yes	% No	% Don't Know
Have Heard of the Access & Habitat Program	51%	49%	1%
Sample Size: 504; Sampling Error: +/- 4.4% (95% confidence interval, 50/50 proportional split)			

Next, respondents who said they had heard of the program were asked where they had heard it. The results, shown in Table 2 for the 255 hunters who had heard of the program, reflect a wide variety of ways in which hunters became aware of it. The most common ways in which hunters heard of the program are word of mouth and a printed brochure or other document (many of the "other" responses refer to other printed documents as well).

ODFW Staff	3%
Access & Habitat Council or Board Member	0%
ODFW Brochure	14%
ODFW Web Site	3%
Advertisement	3%
Posted Signs	0%
Word of Mouth	34%
Other (Specified in "Responses to Open-Ended Questions")	44%
Sample Size: 255; Sampling Error: +/- 6.1% (95% confidence interval, 50/50 proportional split)	

Awareness & Use of Specific Access & Habitat Sites

The next group of questions, comprising the bulk of the survey, asked respondents about particular Access and Habitat properties and whether they had (a) heard of them and (b) if so, whether they had ever hunted on them. After asking about eight specific sites, we asked:

Have you ever hunted on any other properties open through the Access and Habitat program?

Based on this question, an additional 6% of the hunters in the sample reported having hunted on other Access and Habitat properties.

As shown in Table 3, below, familiarity with selected A & H sites ranges from a low of 6% for Linn Forest Deputy to a high of 34% for the Sled Springs Management Area. The percentage hunted for the sites ranges from a low of 1% for the Coombs Canyon Regulated Hunt Area (RHA) and the Linn Forest Deputy Program Lands to a high of 9% for the North Coast Travel Management Area (TMA).² Table 3, below, lists all eight sites included in the survey in order of most well-known to least well-known.

Table 3: Percentage of Oregon Hunters Who Have Heard of and Hunted on Specific Access and Habitat Program Sites.		
Access & Habitat Property	% Heard of	% Hunted
Sled Springs Management Area	34%	6%
North Alsea & Stott Mountain TMA	29%	7%
North Coast Travel Management Area	26%	9%
Heppner Big Game Management Unit	26%	5%
Jackson Cooperative TMA	16%	5%
Coombs Canyon Regulated Hunt Area	12%	1%
Timbers, Spring Butte & Embody Block TMA	11%	3%
Linn Forest Deputy Program Lands	6%	1%
Percent Hunted Other Access & Habitat Properties	/	6%
Total Percent Hunted Access & Habitat Properties	/	31%
Sample Size: 504; Sampling Error: +/- 4.4% (95% confidence interval, 50/50 proportional split)		

Based on their responses to the eight site-specific questions in addition to the question about other sites, we were able to create a count of the number of Access and Habitat sites that hunters have hunted on.³ As shown in Table 3, 31% of hunters overall have hunted in Access and Habitat sites. Table 4, below, breaks this down further, by number of Access and Habitat Sites hunted. While most Access and Habitat hunters have hunted on only one site, roughly 10% of Oregon’s hunters have hunted on two or more Access and Habitat Sites.

² These numbers refer to percentages of the entire sample, not just those who have heard of the sites.

³ This will slightly underestimate the count in cases in which hunters have hunted in more than one site not specifically listed. The overall figure of 31%, however, is accurate.

No sites	69%
1 site	21%
2 sites	6%
3 sites	2%
4 sites	1%
5 sites	1%
Sample Size: 504; Sampling Error: +/- 4.4% (95% confidence interval, 50/50 proportional split)	

Experiences of Access and Habitat Hunters

The next group of questions was asked only of the 31% of the sample (155 hunters) who reported having hunted on Access and Habitat properties, and asked of their experiences and evaluations of the program. First, we asked how many years they have been hunting on Access and Habitat Properties. As shown in Table 5, below, a substantial majority of Access and Habitat hunters – 61% – have hunted on Access and Habitat Properties for five or more years. This is solid evidence of an established base of experienced Access and Habitat hunters.

Less than 1 Year	12%
1-2 Years	10%
3-4 Years	11%
5 or More Years	61%
Don't Know	3%
No Answer	3%
Sample Size: 155; Sampling Error: +/- 7.9% (95% confidence interval, 50/50 proportional split)	

Next, we asked how frequently hunters use Access and Habitat properties. As shown in Table 6, a relatively small percentage are frequent users, 11%, at six times or more per year and 8% at 3-5 times per year. The rest use Access & Habitat properties 1-2 times per year (30%), once every few years (37%) or never (7%).

6 Times per Year or More	11%
3-5 Times per Year	8%
1-2 Times per Year	30%
Once Every Few Years	37%
Never	7%
Don't Know	3%
No Answer	3%
Sample Size: 155; Sampling Error: +/- 7.9% (95% confidence interval, 50/50 proportional split)	

When asked what they hunt on Access and Habitat Properties, by far the predominant response is “Big Game,” with 80% of hunters in this category.⁴ As shown in Table 7, 5% of hunters reported hunting game birds, and 12% reported hunting a combination of species. 17 of the 18 hunters in the latter category reported hunting big game species as well, in combination with other types of game, the vast majority being game birds.

Big Game	80%
Game Birds	5%
Waterfowl	0%
Combination/Other	12%
Don't Know	1%
No Answer	3%
Sample Size: 155; Sampling Error: +/- 7.9% (95% confidence interval, 50/50 proportional split)	

Access and Habitat hunters were next asked to rate their experience hunting Access and Habitat properties. As shown in Table 8, below, the results are very positive. Altogether, 80% of Access and Habitat hunters rate their experiences positively, including 48% who rate it as very positive. Only 12% rate their experiences negatively, with only 4% rating them as very negative.

Very Positive	48%
Somewhat Positive	32%
In Between/Both	4%
Somewhat Negative	8%
Very Negative	4%
Don't Know	2%
No Answer	3%
Sample Size: 155; Sampling Error: +/- 7.9% (95% confidence interval, 50/50 proportional split)	

⁴ As shown in “Responses to Open-Ended Questions,” a great many of the “combination/other” responses also include big game.

Open-Ended Questions

At the end of the survey we asked a series of open-ended questions in order to allow hunters in our sample to relate, in their own words, their feelings about the Access and Habitat program. Questions included:

- *In your own words, what are some things that you LIKE about hunting on Access and Habitat properties?*
- *What are some things that you DISLIKE about hunting on Access and Habitat properties?*
- *What do you think would be the best way for the Department of Fish and Wildlife to increase public awareness about the Access and Habitat program?*
- *What if any changes do you believe need to be made to improve the Access and Habitat program?*
- *Is there anything else that you would like to say about the Access and Habitat program?*

A complete transcription of all responses to these questions is included in the full project report. Responses to these questions involve a very wide range of thoughts and opinions and will provide ODFW program analysts with excellent feedback when analyzed qualitatively.

Sample Characteristics

The sample database includes basic demographic information, including location⁵ of residence, age and gender. Table 9, below, shows age and gender characteristics of the sample. 86% of the sample is male, consistent with the sample list of licensed hunters in Oregon. The age spread is very diverse, showing all age groups well-represented in the sample, and a median age in the 40s.

Gender	
Male	86%
Female	14%
Age	
18-24	7%
25-34	18%
35-44	21%
45-54	29%
55-64	20%
65 and older	6%
Sample Size: 504; Sampling Error: +/- 4.4% (95% confidence interval, 50/50 proportional split)	

⁵ We include only city in the data set so that individual respondents will not be identifiable. For this reason we have also converted birth date to age, by category.

Because of the very large number of cities represented in the sample, a list of all cities would not be practical. However, to give the reader a sense of the broad geographic diversity of the sample, Table 10, below, shows all cities with at least 3 hunters represented in the sample (i.e., all that round up to 1% of the sample).

Table 10: Cities comprising 1% or More of the Sample.

City	Frequency	Percent
ALBANY	10	2.0
ALOHA	4	.8
BEAVERTON	4	.8
BEND	18	3.6
BORING	3	.6
BROOKINGS	3	.6
CANBY	6	1.2
CENTRAL POINT	4	.8
COOS BAY	3	.6
CORVALLIS	4	.8
COTTAGE GROVE	4	.8
DALLAS	5	1.0
EAGLE POINT	3	.6
ENTERPRISE	3	.6
EUGENE	20	4.0
GRANTS PASS	11	2.2
GRESHAM	6	1.2
HILLSBORO	5	1.0
KLAMATH FALLS	8	1.6
LA GRANDE	7	1.4
LAGRANDE	6	1.2
LAPINE	3	.6
LEBANON	8	1.6
MADRAS	5	1.0
MALIN	3	.6
MCMINNVILLE	4	.8
MEDFORD	7	1.4
MILTON FREEWATER	3	.6
MILWAUKIE	6	1.2
MT VERNON	3	.6
MYRTLE CREEK	4	.8
MYRTLE POINT	4	.8
ONTARIO	4	.8
OREGON CITY	6	1.2
PENDLETON	8	1.6
PILOT ROCK	3	.6
PORTLAND	22	4.4
PRINEVILLE	9	1.8
REDMOND	5	1.0
ROSEBURG	14	2.8
SALEM	13	2.6
SANDY	5	1.0
SCAPPOOSE	5	1.0
SHERWOOD	4	.8
SILVERTON	3	.6
SPRINGFIELD	22	4.4
STAYTON	3	.6
SWEET HOME	4	.8
TERREBONNE	4	.8
TIGARD	4	.8
TILLAMOOK	4	.8
VALE	3	.6
WINSTON	3	.6

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The survey produces a number of findings, including:

- Familiarity with and use of the Access and Habitat Program is widespread, but with room for growth;
- Familiarity with and use of specific Access and Habitat sites varies a great deal from very low to quite substantial;
- Most Access and Habitat Hunters use Access and Habitat Sites occasionally, but have been doing so for several years;
- Access and Habitat sites are used overwhelmingly for big game hunting;
- A large majority of Access and Habitat hunters are happy with the program, the largest group being very happy with it.

Overall, the findings describe a program that is very well established, that is recognized and used by hunters all over the state, and that has very strong user satisfaction.

Further analysis of the other products included in the full survey report, including question-by-question results in “Topline” format, “banner tables”, in which all questions are cross-tabulated with key variables, and responses to open-ended questions, will yield further findings.