

Wildlife Harvest: Sharing Nature's Bounty & Gifts of Food

The Etiquette and Practices of America's Hunters

Obtaining wild meat is one of the fundamental benefits of regulated hunting. Hunting provides access to wild sourced food, improving food security for many hunting and non-hunting households in the United States. Government surveys of hunters in the United States list motivations for hunting including obtaining food (90% of hunters), the challenge, being close or connected to nature, and spending time with family and friends. In the United States, a total of 114 species of wildlife can be lawfully hunted. An estimated 56 million wild animals were harvested by hunters translating to over 1.6 billion meals (over 1,048 million meals of white-tailed deer alone) locally sourced protein from forests, fields, and wetlands. About 95% of successful hunters report sharing the food they harvest with members of their family and their neighbors. The sharing of wild harvested food is an important part of the lives and lifestyles of hunters benefitting many families and communities throughout the United States.

114

Species Harvested

56 million

Wild Animals Harvested

1.6 billion

Meals (6 oz servings)



Species	Number Harvested	Meals (6 oz servings)
White-tailed Deer	5,937,000	1,048,000,000
Elk	179,000	107,000,000
Mule Deer	339,000	61,000,000
Wild Turkey	746,000	13,000,000
Pronghorn	80,000	9,000,000
Wood Duck	1,011,000	1,000,000
Moose	12,000	10,000,000
Black Bear	45,000	8,000,000
Waterfowl (Ducks & Geese)	13,627,000	33,000,000

**Wild Harvest Initiative™ data was collected from state and federal wildlife agencies between 2014/15–2022/23 hunting seasons.*

Hunters Sharing in their Community

On average...

- 95% of hunters shared their wild meat
- Hunters shared 15–28% of all wild meat obtained outside of their household.
- Each hunter shared their harvest with 2 people inside of the household and 3–5 people outside of the household.



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