

Volume 2019 Issue 2

September 2019

Man stranded in the top of a tree after tree limb knocks deer stand loose



NBH BOARDWALK

NARRAGANSETT BOW HUNTERS

CLUB NEWSLETTER

Comments from the board

As our members are aware, we are in the process of installing a new stove with a fire suppression system as required by the fire marshal. Mike and his group are forging ahead to complete this task. The first step of getting the system has been accomplished, the system is here at the club. Please do not move or touch any of the pieces. Mike P. is working with John S. to have a permit pulled for the electrical and he is also in communication with the fire marshal for the final inspection. We are looking to complete this project next month if everything goes well. Great job to all that have been involved with this.

John Dexter



2019—2020 NOMINEES

Our nominees for the upcoming year are:

**President – John Dexter; Vice President – John Specht;
Secretary – Bobbi Ozanian; Treasurer – Becky Specht;
Board seat – Chris Connolly**

Look for your ballot in the mail! Elections will take place at the Annual Meeting, October 8, 2019

INDOOR 3D LEAGUE—CHRISTMAS TOY DRIVE RAFFLE

November 21st



What Statistics Say About Falling From a Treestand

By Dave Samuel, August 20, 2018
<https://www.grandviewoutdoors.com>



If you haven't fallen from an elevated stands, the odds are good you're going to one day. And when you do, odds also say you'll be paralyzed — or worse.

There was a time when firearm accidents were the No. 1 cause of injuries and deaths when hunting. Not anymore. Falls from elevated hunting platforms have now climbed to the top of hunting accidents, and that literally means your life is in your hands every time you get into a tree stand.

There's no question that hunter education courses and wearing blaze orange lowered firearm accidents. Consider that 24 hunters were killed in 1914 during the Wisconsin firearm season. That's one out of every 3,100 hunters. In 2012, there was only one Wisconsin hunting fatality. That dropped the fatality rate to one in 95,143.

The drop in firearm accidents is rather remarkable, but the recent increase in treestand falls is a bit puzzling since there are safety restraints (i.e. safety harnesses, lifelines) that can reduce such falls significantly. Given that almost all falls are preventable, a review of

this situation is warranted. What follows are reviews of studies both by state DNRs and by the medical community, examining the falls from treestands. To review those studies is downright scary, but in doing so maybe more hunters will think twice before putting their lives in danger.

When reviewing the medical studies, one could easily question the sanity of any hunter who climbs into a stand without some type of restraining device. You would think that spinal and skull injuries, paralysis, large medical bills, lost wages, etc. would create a sense of responsibility among all hunters. That, however, doesn't appear to be the case, because many do not use safety devices.

The Duke University Medical Center Study

The Duke University Medical Center reviewed 27 patients who came for treatment of spinal injuries resulting from treestand accidents. Mean age was 46 years, and the mean height of the falls was 19.6 feet. There were 30 different types of spinal fractures in these patients. Significant neurologic injury occurred in 12 patients (44 percent). Nine had significant spinal surgery (pins, fusion).

Related: Top 12 tips for bagging a Booner

In another study of 22 patients who entered a spinal cord injury referral center from 1995-2005, the mean age was 40 and the average time of hospitalization was 10 days. The average height of the fall was 18 feet, with 13 (68 percent) occurring during evening hours. Alcohol use was a factor in 10 percent of the falls. Eight of 22 patients sustained injury to the cervical spine with three being complete deficits and two incomplete deficits.

Thirteen of 22 had injury to the thoracic or lumbar spine with 10 having neurologic deficits (three complete and seven incomplete). Thirteen of 22 required surgery. If I read the results correctly, of 22 treated for spinal injuries, six ended up paralyzed and nine partially paralyzed. There was no discussion of what impact these injuries had on the hunter or his family.

The Ohio State University Medical Center Study

A survey was also done of 130 hunters admitted to the Ohio State University Medical Center for injuries. The mean age was 41, and 65 (50 percent) of injuries were from falls while 29 percent were from gunshot wounds. Thirty-eight (59 percent) treestand accidents resulted in spinal fractures. Surgery was required for 81 percent of those and 8 percent had permanent neurological deficits. So three of 38 suffered permanent paralysis.



I know this might get redundant, but apparently hunters aren't getting the message. So here is another report from the Helen DeVos Children's Hospital in Grand Rapids, Michigan. They reviewed 24 hunting accident patients admitted during the Michigan gun season from 1999-2004. Sixteen of those were treestand victims, with the average age being 45. Two fatalities occurred. The majority of those 16 victims had to have surgery, two needing neurosurgical surgery

Enough of these rather-depressing medical reviews — though there are lots more. They're all pretty much the same. Hunters around 40 years of age, falls occurring in the evening and the height of falls being around 15 to 18 feet. The real kicker among these data is the rather high percentage that result in spinal injuries and paralysis. That should trigger a response in all hunters, but apparently it doesn't.

Study in Wisconsin

For my regular readers, you know I write about deer biology. However, after reading the following paper I decided to write about this treestand topic. I looked at the data from a paper that came out in 2016 titled "Behavior and risk probabilities of deer stand falls among Wisconsin hunters." The authors reviewed two statewide hunter surveys done in 2013 and audits of medical records from 2009-13.

Up until this study we knew little about such falls, nor the rate of use of safety restraints. There was one 2003 Wisconsin study that showed that 84 percent of hunters used treestands, 62 percent owned a safety restraint, but only 31 percent always used them and another 14 percent usually used them.

The data from the Wisconsin study showed that gun-only deer hunters hunted 5.1 days, while those that hunted with both firearms and bows spent 23 days a year in the field. This means that if you hunt with bows and guns your exposure to an accident is 4½ times greater than if you only gun hunt.



Study on Bowhunters

Most (84 percent) gun deer hunters used an elevated stand. Not surprisingly, more bowhunters (94 percent) used elevated stands. Bowhunters were more likely (33 percent) to "always" use a safety device, while 23 percent of gun hunters "always" did so. Thus, 67 percent of bowhunters and 77 percent of gun hunters in stands do not always use safety devices. The reasons they cite for not doing so reflect how little they think about the medical data cited

above. The reasons were similar for bow and gun hunters, with "I am extra careful climbing up or down from my stand" being the top excuse. "I have never fallen or had a near-accident" came in second. "It is difficult to use" was third. Twenty-eight percent of archers surveyed fell or nearly fell. This was almost twice the level for gun hunters. For both groups, around 55 percent fell or nearly fell while climbing or descending from their stands.
Hang-on Stands

This next piece of data really surprised me. As I've gotten older, ladder stands have become my stand of choice. They sure seem safer to get into and out of than hang-on stands. And according to this data, they are safer, but not by much for bowhunters. Thirty-three percent of all falls by bowhunters came from hang-on stands, while 32 percent came from ladder stands. So much for the myth that you don't need a safety restraint when using ladder stands. For gun hunters, things were a bit different. Forty-four percent of falls were from hang-ons, while 21 percent were from ladders. Climbing stand-users also fell. Twenty percent of bowhunter falls were from climbers, and 26 percent of gun hunter falls were from climbers. Obviously hunters using climbers should use a lifeline.

Given all this, what is your overall risk of having a fall that requires medical attention when using treestands, ladder stands or climbers if you bow hunt and gun hunt? The researchers put together some interesting data and determined the following. If you hunted for only one year, your odds of a serious stand accident are one out of 1,010 hunters. If you hunt for 10 years, your odds go up to one of 100. Hunt 20 years with both bow and gun and your chances of falling are one in 50. Considering how many of those falls end up in paralysis, these are not good odds. If you deer hunt with bow and gun for 30 years and you haven't worn a safety restraint during that time then your odds of having a fall that requires medical treatment are one out of 33 hunters. For deer hunters that have hunted 40 years with bow or gun the odds are one in 25.

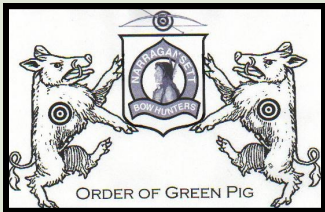
Conclusion

There are several conclusions you can draw from these studies. First, all hunter safety courses must include treestand safety. All that I'm familiar with do so. What is scary to me is the trend for younger hunters to ignore the use of safety harnesses and lifelines. If you wear your safety harness and hook it to a lifeline before you climb into a treestand or ladder stand, you literally cannot fall. OK, you can fall, but you won't fall to the ground. Yet the majority of hunters do not always use harnesses or lifelines even though most own one or both of these devices. I get the feeling that sometimes younger hunters believe they are invincible. Another point. It would be interesting to know what percent of fathers that take their kids into tree or ladder stands use safety devices. For those who do not (and based on all the above data, many do not), what a terrible example to set for those young, learning hunters. My final observation is also family related. What impact does a hunter's paralysis have on his/her family after a fall that occurred simply because they did not use a harness or lifeline?



NARRAGANSETT BOW HUNTERS

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[http://
www.narragansettbowhunters.
org](http://www.narragansettbowhunters.org)

Narragansett Bow Hunters (NBH) is a member owned, private club whose purpose is to promote and encourage the use of the bow and arrow in both competition and the legal pursuit of game. We are family oriented and encourage new memberships. NBH enjoys the status of being the sole "archery only" club in Rhode Island. Annual memberships are available for less than the cost of one good archery target.

Our membership is a cross section of RI consisting of families and singles, young and old, men and women, young adults and children. NBH is proud to have among its members several current and past state and national archery champions. They and several other highly knowledgeable and experienced members are usually more than happy to offer advice, share their experiences and offer valuable tips and tricks to the new or occasional archer. We are also proud that we have several young, budding future champions.

NBH is situated on approximately 45 private acres just off of exit 3A/B on Route 4 in North Kingstown. NBH assets include a heated clubhouse; a 14 target NFAA field archery range; a 30 target NFAA certified 3D range*, and a 10-50 yard practice range. The clubhouse includes a twelve station, 20 yard NFAA certified range; separate bathrooms for women and men; a complete kitchen, and a lounge area for relaxing with family and fellow club members. Each member is provided a personal key so that they can enjoy the club to their personal schedule.

*The club maintains a standing 15 target range at all times and sets 30 targets for monthly shoots



REMAINING NBH 3D SCHEDULE

October 6

December 1—Christmas Toy
Drive

NBH OUTDOOR

The Veterans fundraiser shoot on 9/7 raised \$335. Additionally \$220 was donated during the Sunday shoot. 59 shooters participated over the weekend. Thanks to all for bringin in \$555 to help RI homeless veterans

September 7

BOWHUNTER RELEASE: Rob MacDonald

RECURVE: John Bullock—221, Paul Fahlman 200. Mike Prior 194

LONGBOW: Men— Bob Booth 209

HUNTER CHALLENGE (COMPOUND): Chuck Howard 276

September 8

BOWHUNTER RELEASE: Women—Kris Levesque 293

RECURVE: Women—Katie Vaudrain 167; Men—John Dean/John Bullock 213; Larry Whitford 207

LONGBOW: Men—Steve Richard 246, Paul Fahlman 229; Mike D 225

PRIMATIVE: Tony Teolis 170

BAREBOW: Men—Peter Renkech 163, Maray Dura 60

HUNTER CHALLENGE (COMPOUND): Greg Vaudrain 243

YOUTH: Sam Dura 86

CUB: Women—James Williamson 296, Anthony Chambeal 156