

One of the most important things we can do is be more relevant to present-day Californians. If the public views hunting as the domain of a relatively small group of Californians, there will be considerably less support for it. We must redouble our efforts to make sure women, ethnic minorities and others not currently well represented among hunters are well integrated into our community. It's not just the right thing to do, but, honestly, a matter of long-term survival for hunting.

—Mark Hennelly, CWA VP for Legislative Affairs and Public Policy (see p. 48)

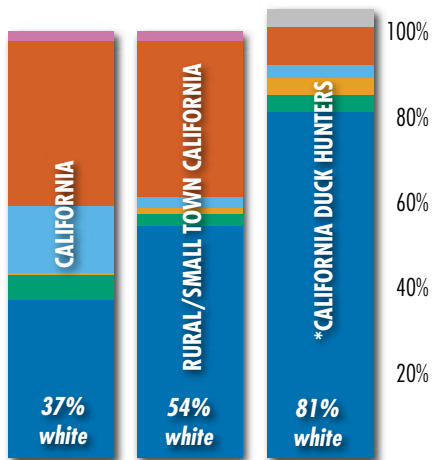
WHO WE ARE

CALIFORNIA HUNTER DEMOGRAPHICS

There is almost no data on California hunters' ethnic breakdown because the state doesn't collect it. But we do have a survey of duck hunters that California Waterfowl commissioned in 2017.

Nationwide, migratory bird hunters are 99% white, the least diverse of all hunters. We've beat that, by a lot. But duck hunters in California are still less diverse than the state's rural areas, our traditional hunting strongholds.

(NATIONAL DATA SOURCE: USFWS)



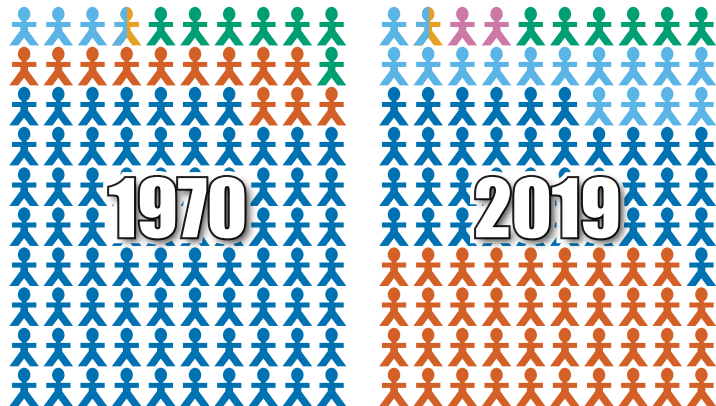
* More than 100% — participants could choose all that apply. (Top bar is "other" or declined to answer)

SOURCES: California source — California Dept. of Finance; rural California source — Census data, via Housing Assistance Council analysis; California duck hunters — Responsive Management private survey



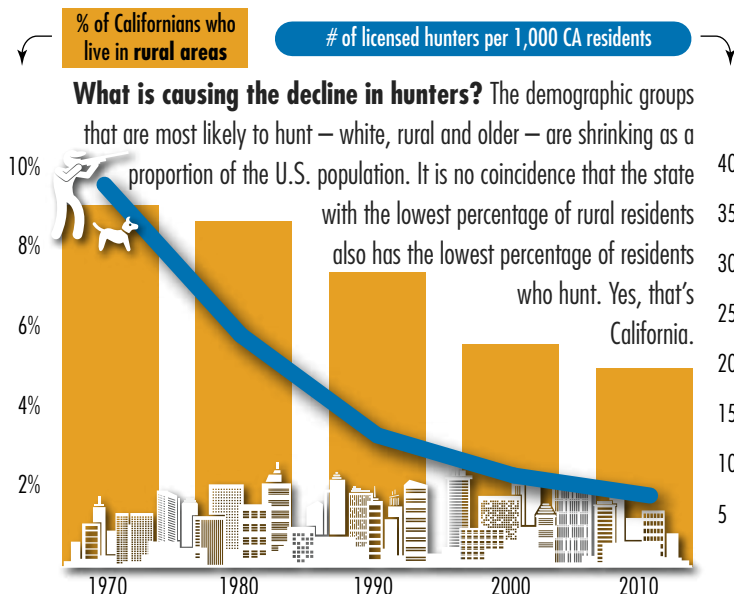
CA'S DEMOGRAPHICS HAVE CHANGED. A LOT.

Whites are dwindling as a proportion of the state's population. If we continue to draw new hunters primarily from the ranks of white Californians, even maintaining hunter numbers — much less political clout — will be difficult.



SOURCE: California Department of Finance population estimates (multi-racial category added in 2000)

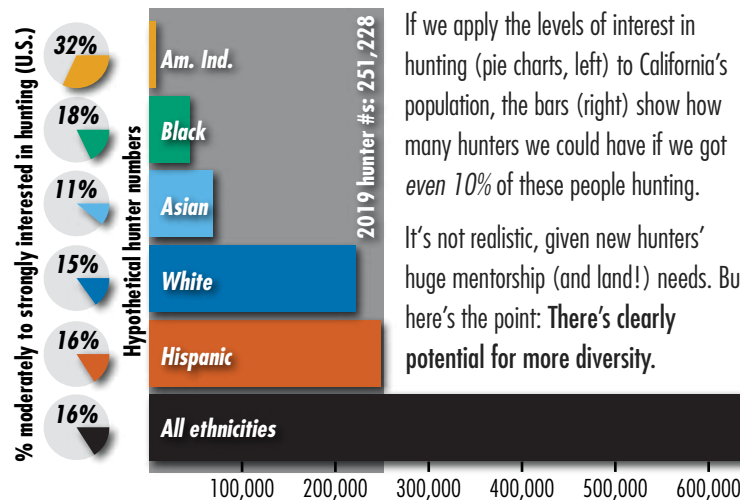
HUNTER DECLINE: MANY FACTORS AT PLAY



SOURCES: Iowa State University (rural data 1970-2010), CA Department of Fish and Wildlife (license data), "The Dirty Dozen Threats to Hunting: 21st Century Implications for Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation" (2017)

THIS MIGHT SURPRISE YOU...

While hunters are mostly white, the level of moderate to strong interest in hunting is strikingly similar in most ethnic groups.



SOURCE: Interest levels — "America's Wildlife Values: The Social Context of Wildlife Management in the U.S." (2018); current hunter numbers — CA Department of Fish and Wildlife



California Waterfowl's vision for the state is thriving waterfowl populations, vibrant wetland ecosystems and *respected hunting communities*. One way to earn more respect is to look, demographically, more like the rest of California – it's harder to categorically dismiss people who look like you. More respect would *decrease* our political vulnerability and *increase* our relevance.

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Q&A: INCREASING HUNTER DIVERSITY IN CALIFORNIA

by HOLLY A. HEYSER, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

Where does CWA stand?

California Waterfowl is committed to increasing diversity among hunters and within the organization, for both its inherent and strategic value. We look forward to working on this with our supporters and volunteers.

Whose job is it to improve hunter diversity?

Broadly speaking, this is a hunter recruitment and retention issue. Government agencies like the state Department of Fish and Wildlife and organizations like CWA that already work in hunter recruitment can have the biggest impact.

Many state and federal agencies and nonprofits are actively engaged in this. DFW's new R3 (Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation) plan addresses the need for inclusivity and has recommendations for R3 practitioners. (See wildlife.ca.gov/r3.)

But there's a role for any hunter who wants to help.

What's the impact on existing hunters?

Increasing diversity could mean adding more total hunters, which would be great for political clout, but yes, more competition on the landscape.

However, increasing diversity can also mean simply replacing hunters who "age out" with a more diverse cohort of new hunters. More diversity with the same numbers would still benefit hunting.

What are the obstacles?

Many obstacles to recruiting and retaining hunters are the same across all ethnic groups: People from nonhunting backgrounds lack the built-in knowledge

base, cultural familiarity, supply of loaner gear and supports available to people from hunting families or communities.

When recruiting from urban areas, there may be additional obstacles, such as distance from hunting grounds, disapproval from peer groups, and fear of not fitting in with a more conservative crowd. We have seen all of these issues with new hunters CWA works with.

When recruiting diverse hunters, there is another consideration: People who have, or know someone who has, experienced racism in another social setting can feel trepidation about venturing into a space dominated by armed strangers who don't resemble them.

Here's a personal example, albeit one



about gender, not race: The first time I told my mother, a nonhunter, that I was going duck hunting alone, she asked whether it was safe for me, as a female, to be out there alone surrounded by armed men. She just had no idea what it was like out there. I told her that duck hunters are very focused on duck hunting, and that, realistically, the biggest threats most of us face are hunters encroaching on our space in free roam.

The good news is that when I contacted the current chief and immediate past chief of California's game wardens, neither could recall any reported incidents involving racism in hunting. But remember: People thinking of taking

up hunting have no way of knowing that. And of course, most of us existing hunters also have no way of knowing what diverse hunters experience in the field.

So, what do we do to make progress?

At the **organizational level**, research shows the main focus should be on adults; kids don't have the wherewithal to hunt on their own once they've completed hunter ed. (CWA has added scores of adult and family programs, without cutting youth programs.)

Marketing needs to be inclusive, so potential participants see people who look like them in promotional materials. (CWA does this.) This goes beyond race: Gender, age and even political persuasion are cues people look for (they have told us this!) when deciding whether they'll feel comfortable in an unfamiliar setting.

Targeted outreach efforts should take into account differences in how cultures relate to the outdoors, for example, whether a particular culture is oriented to solo excursions or big family outings. (CWA is not currently doing any targeted outreach; this is one way we can improve.)

On a **personal level**, all hunters can be more welcoming. Keep it simple – at the hunter check station, consider simply replacing your poker face with a smile.

Those who love mentoring can help diverse new hunters. And nonwhite hunters can, if they choose, play critical roles as both mentors *and* ambassadors.

Taken in combination, these efforts say, "Come on in – you're welcome here in our community." 🙌