

South Dakota Office of Tourism



Hunting Experience Survey
Winter 2010

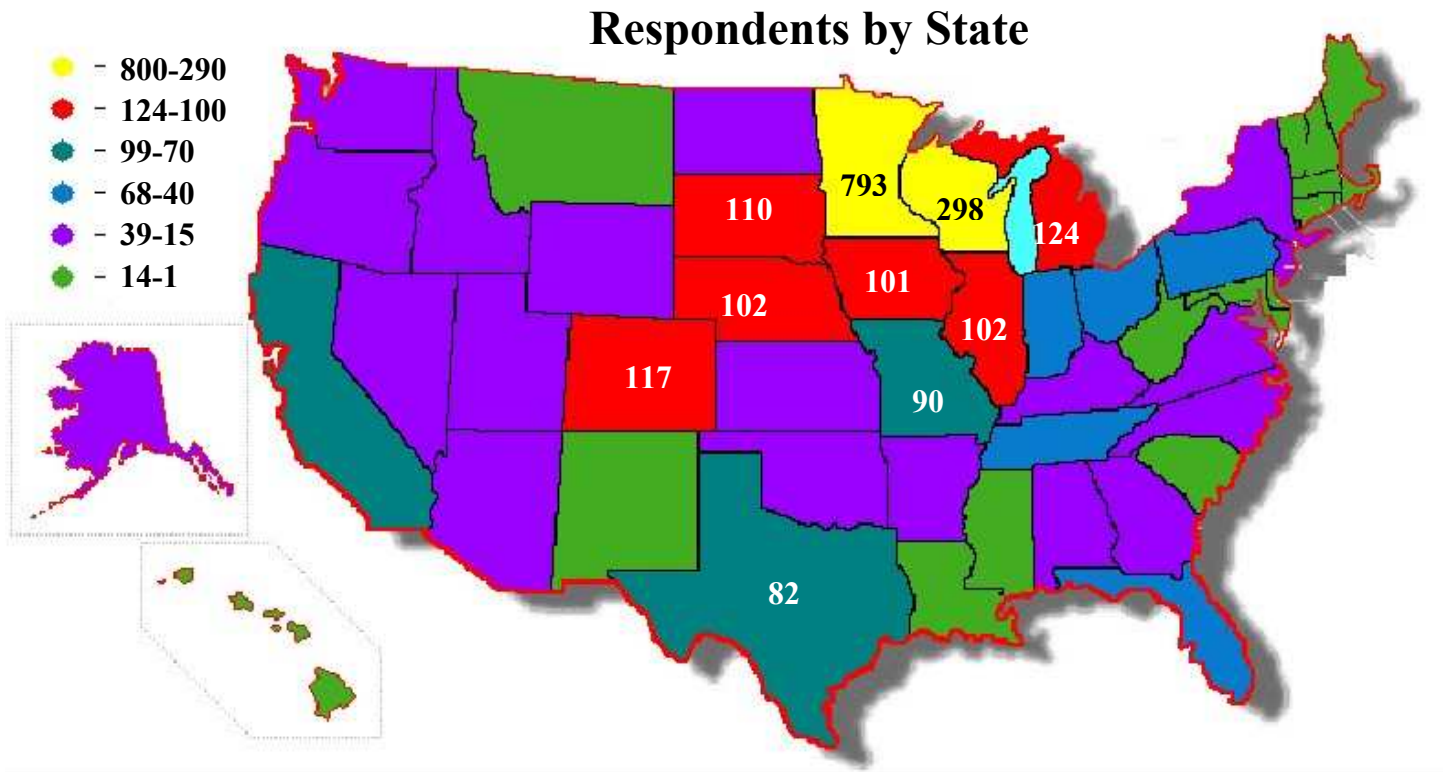
Table of Contents

Methodology.....	3
Key Summary Highlights.....	4
Report Findings.....	5

Methodology

On Tuesday, December 28, 2010, members of the South Dakota Office of Tourism's outdoor and hunting interests email database were invited to participate in a hunting experience survey. Of the 28,608 surveys sent, 28,163 were delivered and 5,060 (18%) opened the message. The message returned 3,198 completed surveys for an 11.4% completion rate. One completed survey was chosen at random to receive a \$100 gift card.

Responses came from every state in the United States as well as Canada and the Netherlands. The following map highlights the number of respondents from across the country. The top ten states are indicated in the graph below.



Key Summary Highlights

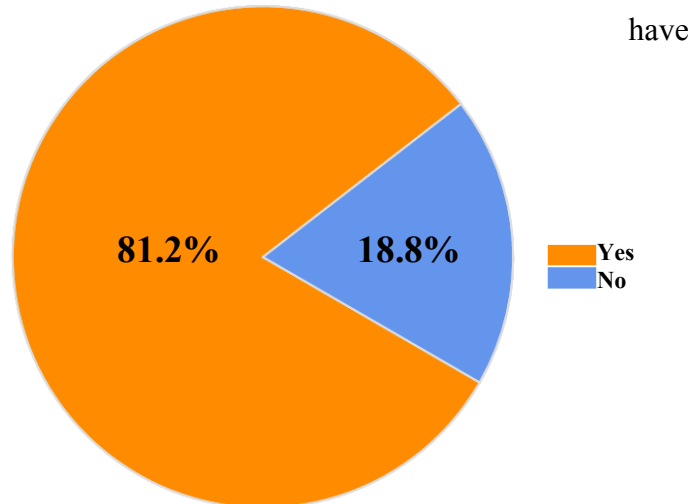
- ◆ 3,198 completed surveys
- ◆ Responses from all 50 states plus Canada and the Netherlands
- ◆ Top 3 states for responses: Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan
- ◆ 81.2% of respondents have previously hunted in South Dakota
- ◆ Average length between hunting trips to South Dakota is 8.8 days*
- ◆ Most hunters travel by private vehicle
- ◆ Average length of hunting trip is 5.4 days
- ◆ Majority of hunters stay at a hotel/motel
- ◆ Pheasants are the most popular game to hunt
- ◆ Majority of hunters primarily hunt on private land
- ◆ Plentiful game is the largest influence when choosing a hunting destination

* For more in-depth results, see Question 2 on page 5

Report Findings

Question 1 – Have you hunted in South Dakota before?

Of the 3,198 total survey respondents, 2,586 indicated they previously hunted in South Dakota.



Question 2 – How long ago was your last hunting trip to South Dakota?

The average length between hunting trips to South Dakota was 8.8 days.

It is important to note this number does not include 12 respondents who indicated they had not been hunting in 25+ years. These 12 respondents heavily influenced the outcome and, as a result, were removed from analysis of this question.

Question 3 – Would you recommend hunting in South Dakota to family and friends?

An overwhelming 97.2% of respondents would recommend South Dakota hunting to people they know. The majority of positive comments centered around the large number of birds, quality land, friendly people and welcoming atmosphere. Negative comments voiced dealt with the cost of out-of-state licenses, the deer and waterfowl license lottery systems and the 10 day out-of-state pheasant hunting license regulations.

“South Dakota is a bird hunter's dream come true. The residents welcome us back each year and make us feel at home. The bird hunting is the best that I have seen in 23 years of hunting in Montana, Kansas, North Dakota and Nebraska. I will be returning!”

*Travers Edwards, Jr.
Newport News, VA*

“Our family has been (hunting) for 4 generations, and I will encourage the 5th generation (to go). I also had a friend that after many years of hearing about our trips to South Dakota, decided to go this year and had a great hunt.”

*Michael Schilling
Bryan, OH*

“South Dakota, in my estimation, does the best job in managing public land for hunting, which is all we hunt.”

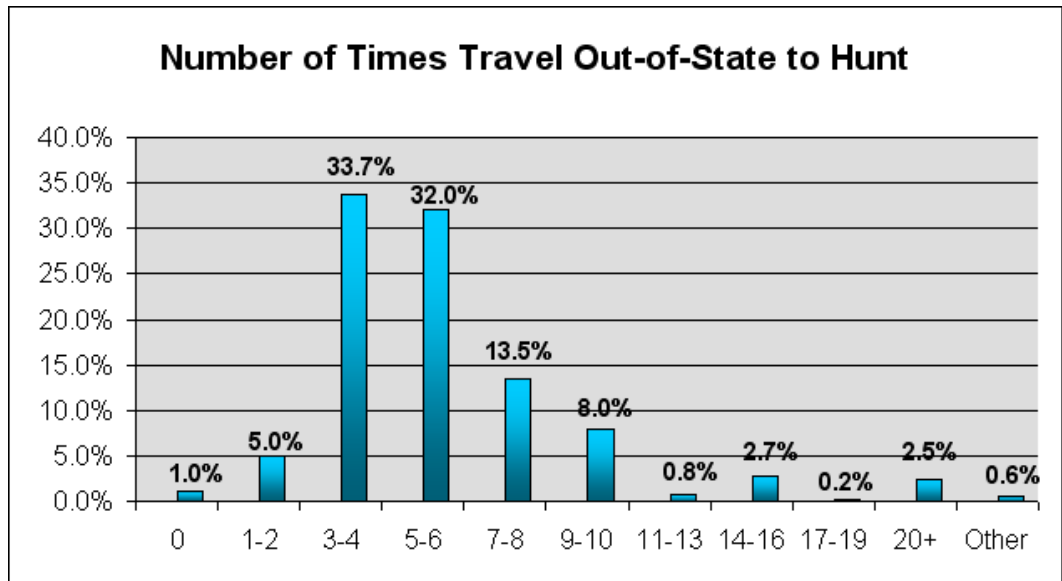
*John Jaekle
West Chester, PA*

“(I) would like the option to have a better way to break down my 10 days of pheasant hunting. With the internet now days, we should be able to just go back for a long weekend.”

*Chuck Keyes
Monticello, MN*

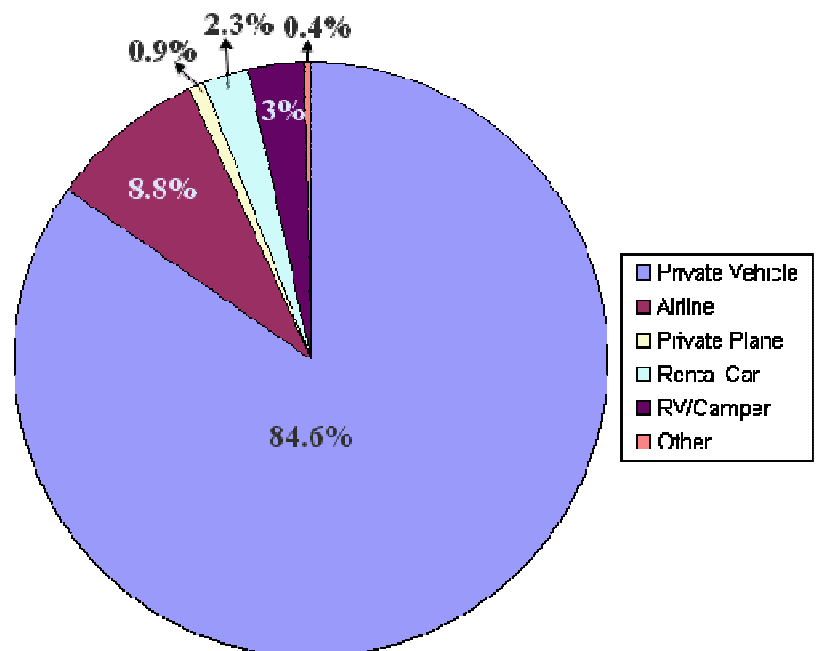
Question 4 – Approximately how many times per year do you travel out-of-state to hunt?

The most common responses were between 3-4 times (33.7%) and 5-6 times (32%). It is important to note that a large number of respondents were from Minnesota, thus showing many hunters make multiple repeat visits to South Dakota to hunt. Many hunters commented that the number of times they travel out-of-state to hunt is usually determined by the time of year they are traveling.



Question 5 – What mode of transportation do you primarily use to travel to your hunting destinations?

A large majority of hunters primarily use a private vehicle to travel to their hunting destinations. Over 320 of the 3,198 respondents (9.7%) primarily travel by a commercial or private plane.



Question 6 – When planning a hunting trip, how many days do you typically allow?

The average hunter sets aside an average of 5.4 days for each hunting trip they plan. Many respondents reported they set aside 1 to 2 days to travel to and from their hunting destinations.

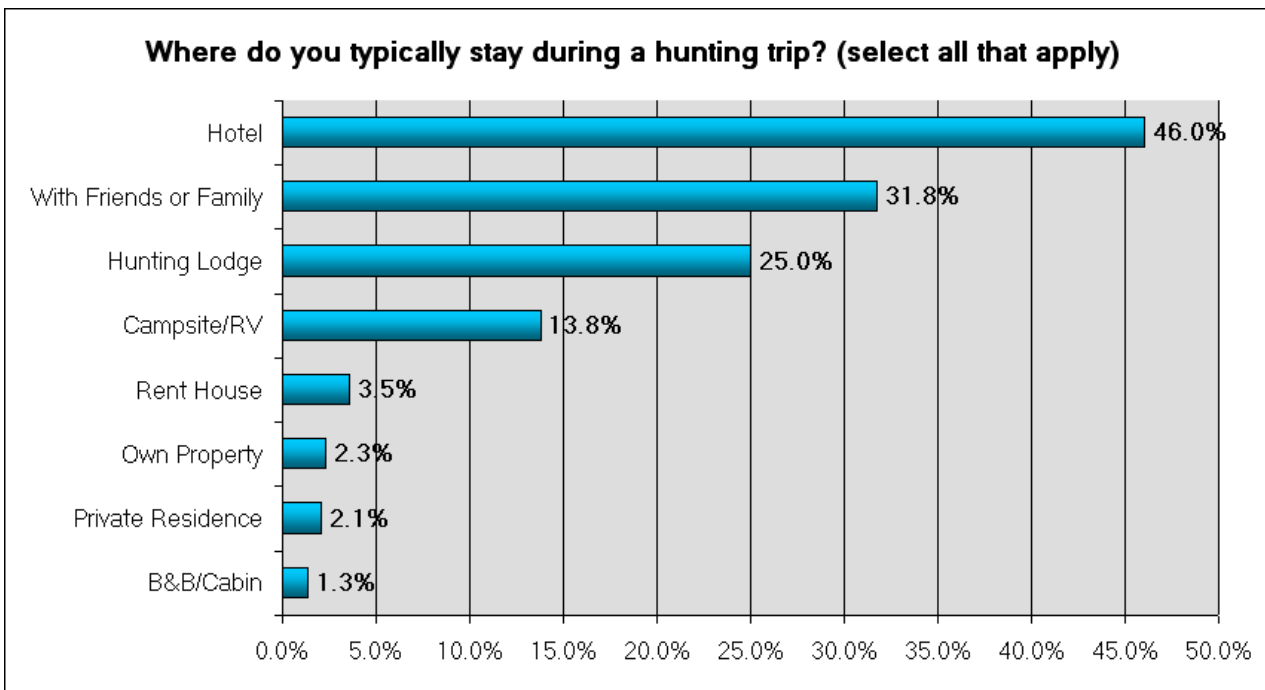
Question 7 – How many people are typically in your hunting party?

The average hunting party was around 4.6 people. A majority of respondents commented that this is the average for their pheasant hunting parties. Hunters tend to have smaller groups for waterfowl, deer and other game. A few respondents reported they usually take a large group (12+ people) pheasant hunting once a year and then continue to hunt throughout the season in smaller groups.

Question 8 – Where do you typically stay during a hunting trip? (select all that apply)

Staying at hotel/motel was the most common lodging choice for hunting visitors. Some respondents also mentioned that the hotel/motels they choose need to be “pet-friendly” so their hunting dogs can stay as well.

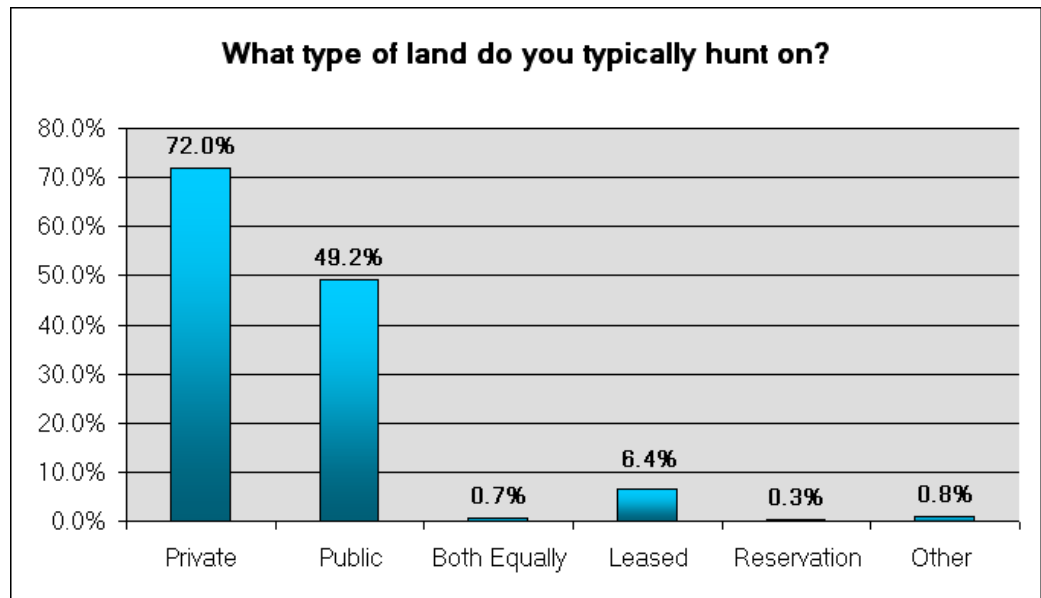
The second most common lodging choice was with friends or family. Rounding out the top lodging choices were hunting lodges and campsites/RVs before dropping off to a low percentage that rent homes, stay on their own property, stay at a private residence (including staying with the landowner) or stay at a B&B/cabin.



Question 9 – What type of land do you typically hunt on?

Note: Respondents could choose multiple answers for this question. If respondents chose both “Private” and “Public,” both answers were recorded separately under each choice.

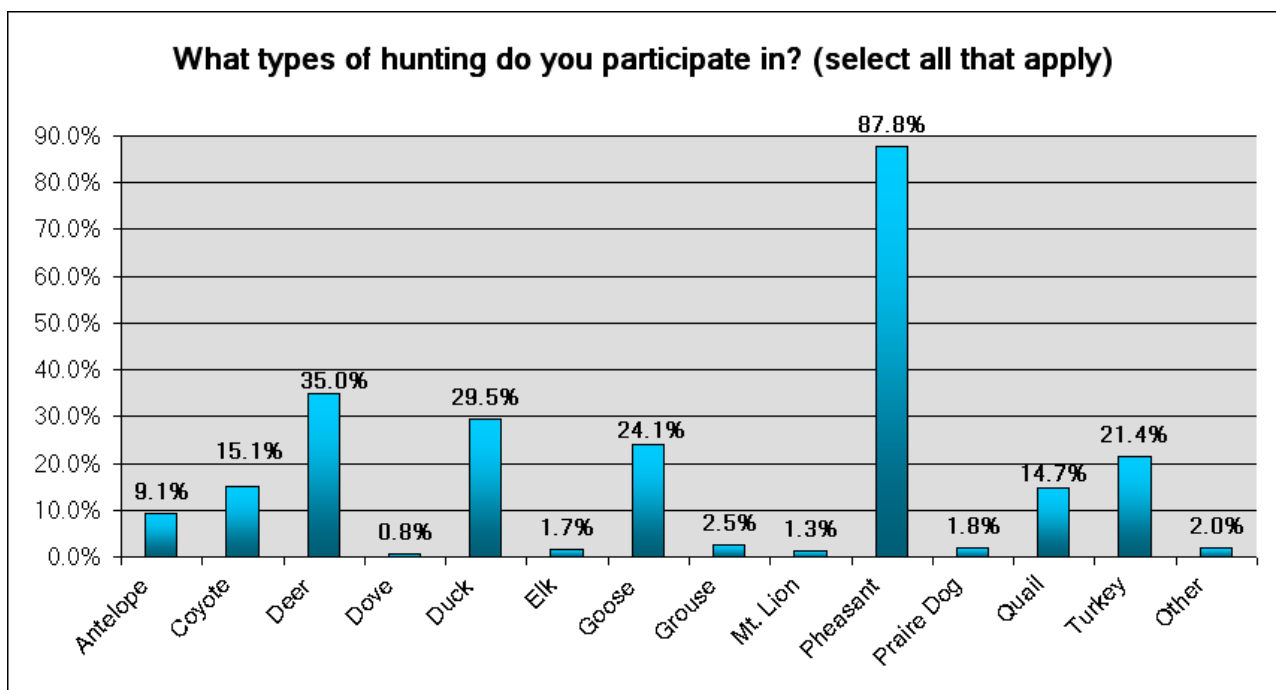
Seventy-two percent of respondents stated they typically hunt on private land. Almost half (49.2%) of respondents typically hunt on public land while 6.4% like to hunt on leased land.



Question 10 – What types of hunting do you participate in? (select all that apply)

Pheasants were by far and away the most popular game respondents hunted. Almost 88% of respondents indicated they hunt pheasants. Deer was the second most popular type of game with 35% followed by Duck and Goose with 29.5% and 24.1%, respectively. Turkey rounded out the top 5 most common types of game hunted with 21.4%.

Question 11 – How much do you typically spend during a hunting trip?



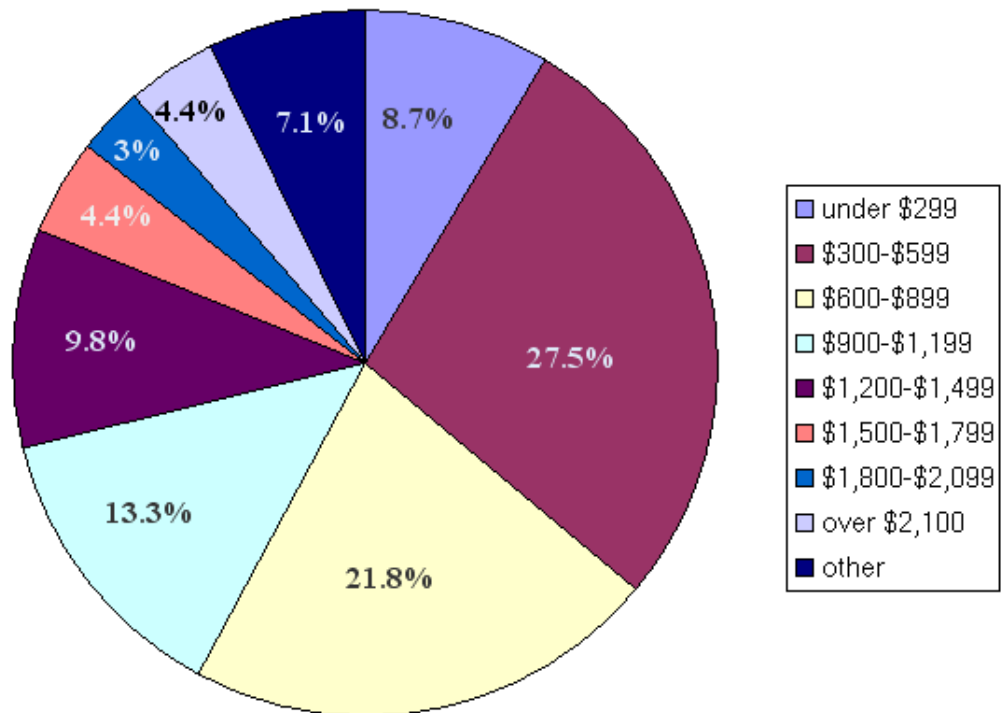
Many hunters indicated that their per-hunting-trip expenses depend upon the type of game they are hunting. Hunters generally are willing to pay more to hunt larger game. Some respondents also indicated that they do not include license fees in their estimations.

Keeping in mind the previous statements, the most common price range per trip was \$300-\$599, followed closely by \$600-\$899 with 21.8% of respondents.

When figuring a price point that is reflective of the respondents, we took the average of each price range and multiplied it by the number of respondents who indicated they fell within that range. We then took the total amount of money spent and divided by the total number of survey respondents.

According to our results, each hunter spends about \$797.09 per trip. It is important to remember this is for all game hunted, not a specific type.

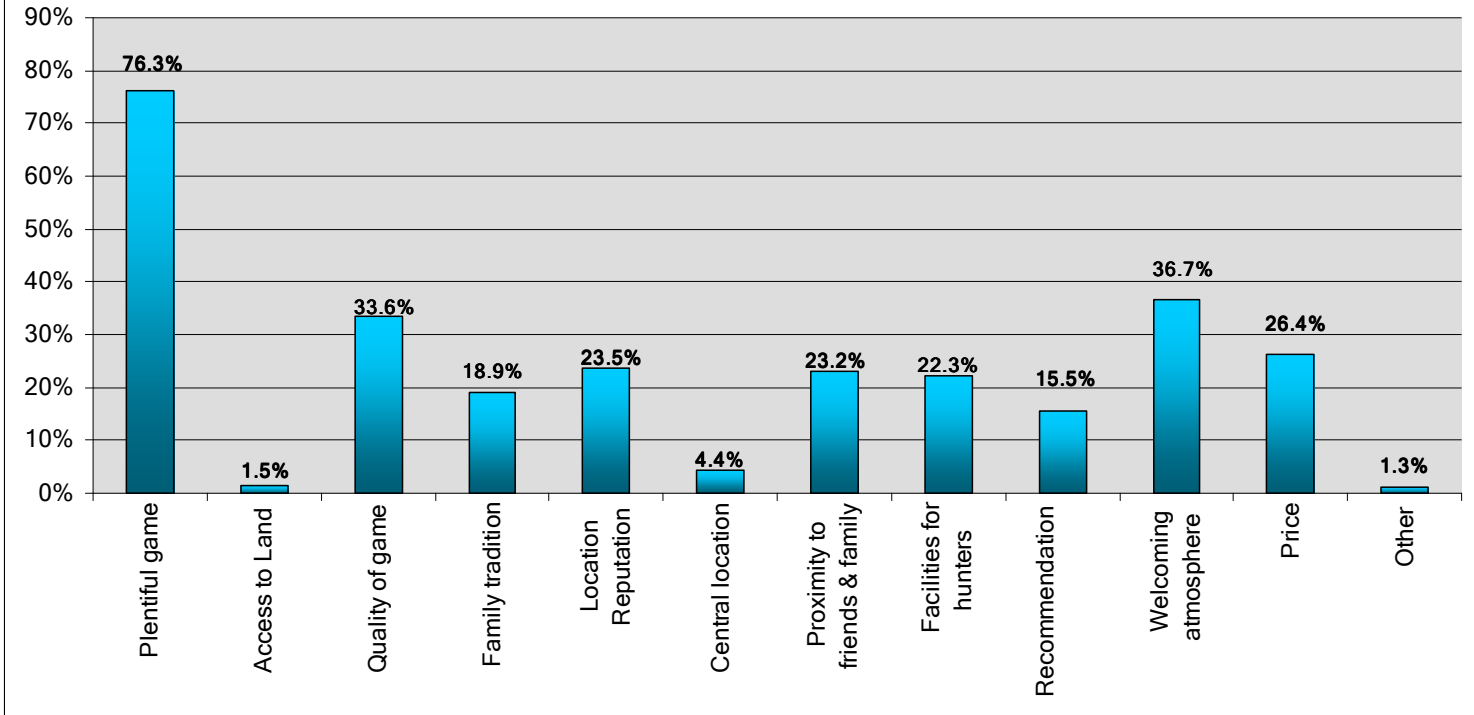
How much do you typically spend during a hunting trip?



Question 12 – What are your top three (3) influences when choosing a hunting destination? (Please select 3)

Respondents were asked to choose three (3) factors that influence their decision to visit a hunting destination. “Plentiful game” was the largest influence (76.3%) followed by “a welcoming atmosphere” with 36.7%. “Quality of game” and “price” were the third and fourth most influential factors. “Location reputation,” “proximity to friends and family” and “facilities for hunters” were closely lumped together with 23.5%, 23.2% and 22.3%, respectively. *(Graph on next page)*

**What are your top three (3) influences when choosing a hunting destination?
(Please Select 3)**



Question 13 – Do you have any comments, suggestions and/or feedback that can help us improve your South Dakota hunting experience?

In addition to complements about marketing, game quality and atmosphere, many hunters voiced their opinions and offered suggestions to make the South Dakota hunting experience better. Frequently mentioned matters dealt with high license fees and the waterfowl lottery license draw. Many hunters feel the lottery draw is a huge deterrent and won't bother taking their chance, even though they want to hunt waterfowl in South Dakota.

Another area for concern for hunters is the non-resident pheasant license limitations. Most respondents would like to be able to break up the 10 days into two 5-day periods instead of 10 straight days. Upon returning to South Dakota, they must purchase another license, which adds up and becomes too pricey for most hunters.

Matters concerning licenses came up frequently. Another issue that concerns out-of-state respondents was they were unable to purchase a resident license even though they are a South Dakota landowner. These respondents would like to be able to purchase a resident license to hunt on their own land.

Public land was also a reoccurring theme among respondents. Some hunters commented they would like to see more public land available since they believe landowners charge too high a price to hunt. A few of the suggestions to better our site were to list public lands and their nearby accommodations along with posting downloadable GPS maps to public land.

Question 14 – Demographics

The map on page 3 shows the top ten states with the number of respondents. The graph below shows the percentage of total responses these states represent. Almost a quarter of respondents originated from Minnesota while the next highest state was Wisconsin with 9.3% of total responses.

With a few exceptions, almost all respondents were male.

Respondent's Origin

