

Survey Shows 18.9 Million Archers

By Shannon Rikard, ATA contributing writer

The first nationwide archery survey showed that 18.9 million Americans age 18 and older participated in archery and/or bowhunting in 2012.

The Archery Trade Association (ATA) recently released the results of the new survey, which was conducted in the same way as Gallup polls. The findings about archery participation and equipment use are scientifically accurate and not estimates from other data.

“Often, the number of archers and bowhunters in the U.S. is estimated by the number of bows, arrows and other equipment sold and hunting licenses issued within a given year,” Jay McAninch, ATA’s president and CEO said. “The results of this survey provide an accurate assessment of where the archery industry is currently and where it has room to grow.”

The ATA has helped fund, develop and implement programs to grow archery for more than a decade. Membership in many archery groups, the demand for archery products and media attention for the sport have increased in recent years. However, a lack of scientific data has made it impossible to determine true nationwide archery participation and interest.

“The survey results already have changed the archery industry’s course,” McAninch said. “Now that we know who is interested in archery and who currently identifies themselves as an archer or bowhunter, we can offer products and education to accommodate current archers while engaging a new audience.”

McAninch said some of the most useful survey results pertained to archery participation, regions where the sport is popular and the bows archers use.

The ATA commissioned the national participation survey through Responsive Management (RM), a respected surveying firm for outdoor activities. With emphasis on obtaining an accurate and precise sample of the U.S. population, RM called 8,335 randomly selected cell phone and residential phone numbers.

Participation in 2012

- Of 235 million total Americans age 18 and older:
 - *18.9 million (8 percent) shot archery or bowhunted.
 - *10.4 million (4.4 percent) participated in the sport of



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target archery only.

- *6.5 million (2.8 percent) participated in archery and bowhunting.

- *1.9 million (0.8 percent) participated exclusively in bowhunting.

“Clearly, 2012 gave archery a marketing boost unlike anything enjoyed by other sports,” McAninch said. “But it still wasn’t clear who was involved in archery and/or bowhunting until now. This survey has offered much-needed clarity for those of us who are working to reach archers and potential archers.”

Of all archers and bowhunters:

- *8.5 million (45 percent) were age 35 to 54.
- *7.9 million (42 percent) were age 18 to 34.
- *2.4 million (13 percent) were older than age 55.
- *5.8 million (31percent) of all archery participants were women.
- *4.2 million (41 percent) of archery-only participants were women.
- *1.6 million (84 percent) of bowhunting-only participants were men.

“We were pleased to learn that one-third of all archery participants last year were women and that 4 million



compound bows.

*5.5 million or 29 percent used cross-bows.

*2.6 million or 14 percent used recurves.

*16.4 million or 86.7 percent used only one type of bow.

*11.5 million or 61 percent used compound bows exclusively.

Of 235 million total Americans age 18 and older, 18.9 million (8 percent) shot archery or bowhunted.
Photo: Shane Indrebo

women were involved exclusively in archery,” McAninch said. “These numbers prove the archery market is strong. They also indicate that archery appeals to a younger audience and that target archery appeals to women more broadly than bowhunting.”

Regions

*10.8 percent of all people living in the Midwest participate.

*8.7 percent of residents in the Northeast participate.

*7.4 percent of those living in the South shoot archery and bowhunt.

*6 percent of all the people living in the West participate.

*5.8 percent of the people residing in the Northeast only shoot archery.

Of the 18.9 million participants in bowhunting and archery in 2012:

*33 percent lived in a small town or city.

*30 percent lived in rural areas.

*19 percent lived in the suburbs.

*18 percent lived in urban areas.

Knowing the regions where the sport is most popular can help the ATA identify areas that may be most interested in establishing and growing archery parks and programs. This information also can help product manufacturers and program coordinators determine where their efforts are best invested.

Equipment

Of the 18.9 million participants in bowhunting and archery in 2012:

*14 million or 75 percent used

Most archers used compound bows, a fact that came as no surprise to McAninch. He noted, however, that the numbers of archers who utilize more than one bow type, or all three bow types, were higher than expected.

“The archery industry works tirelessly to appeal to new archers while staying true to bowhunters,” McAninch said. “The results of this survey indicate that the industry is strong. Now that we know who is shooting archery, where to focus our efforts and what bows archers are using, we can help more people get involved with this outstanding sport.”

The ATA’s 2012 national participation survey was conducted between January and February of 2013. The organization plans to conduct the survey at least every other year to measure growth within the archery industry.



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