CASE STUDY

Hunting and Fishing

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Hunting is big business in the United States. According to the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies, hunting produces $25 billion in retail sales and employs 575,000 Americans. From the initial application for a hunting license to checking harvested game, there are several paper forms to be completed and fees to be collected in association with hunting. It can result in a cumbersome and time-consuming process for many outdoor enthusiasts, as well as the state agency personnel that manage these various processes.

NEW SOLUTION

Arkansas: Online Permits and Game Check

NIC’s Arkansas team has brought eGovernment solutions to both the hunting permit application process and checking harvested game. In the past, to obtain a hunting permit, outdoor enthusiasts had to complete a paper form that were located at various retail and government locations throughout the state. NIC and their partners at the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC) developed a new online permitting service that automated:

- Applying for a permit
- Awarding the permit
- Award notification
- Checking the status of a permit application
- Printing a permit

Hunters who harvested game used to take their animals to a game check location to have them logged and tagged with a paper game check card. Wildlife officers were required to drive from location to location collecting game check cards and later entering the information into a database. NIC’s Arkansas team developed a new online Game Management system that offered a new, completely electronic method for recording harvested game.

- Check their game online, over the phone to a call center, or on a mobile device,
- Real-time information for the agency,
- Pushes out information to hunters such as hunting area closings, season dates, bag limits, and easy access to state hunting regulations.

Mississippi: Sharing Best Practices

In Mississippi, the state was operating a 10-year old online payment processing system to manage its hunting process. The state asked NIC’s Mississippi team to help them revamp
the existing online service with a mobile-optimized solution. The new online process:

- Only requires information to be entered once,
- Pre-populates the information as needed throughout the multi-page application.

The new application is accessible for hunters on-the-go, who can now purchase their licenses from a mobile device. Utilizing many of the features of the existing NIC wildlife services allowed the Mississippi team to implement best practices and launch the service within four months.

**Alabama: Forming Retail Partnerships**

Alabama is one of the top 5 states in the nation for hunting, and the state worked with many retail outlets to process hunting licenses. However, the process was cumbersome and paper-intensive, which resulted in retailers having issues with compliance, loss, and theft.

NIC’s Alabama team partnered with the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to pilot a new electronic, over-the-counter licensing retail service at 15 national retail stores in Alabama. NIC’s team rolled out employee training on the new system for the stores’ clerks and provided an interactive tutorial.

**RESULTS**

Efficiencies resulted from each of the new licensing and game check services. Mobile convenience was delivered in Arkansas and Mississippi, and in Alabama manual data entry was eliminated. Specific results include:

**Arkansas**
- Game Check allows hunters to check their game instantly instead of having to find a check station. Over 220,000 game checks are submitted each year, and 40% hunters use a mobile device to submit their check.
- Game Check System has allowed for AGFC to look at trends as they unfold rather than 6-8 months after the season.
- Permitting system has automated the process of applying for and awarding hunts on public land in the state. Around 55,000 permits are awarded each year to hunters, and 3,000 of those are sold in a one-time “left over sale” day prior to the start of hunting season.

**Mississippi**
- The online permit application was reduced from 7 pages to 4, resulting in 5 minutes saved by every hunter applying for a permit online.
- The new online service helped reduce calls to the customer service center.
- 69% of all visits to the licensing site are now from a mobile device.
- Online transactions are up by 24%, creating additional revenue for the state.

**Alabama**
- The original pilot of 15 retail stores was expanded to 246 locations including three additional national retailers, as well as state parks, small business retailers, and Probate offices across the state.
- One major retailer estimated that during the pilot the new system saved 16,000 employee hours.
- The agency estimated an annualized savings of more than $200,000 in shipping, printing, reporting, document storage, and staff hours.