



**WESTERN STATES WILD TURKEY TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
AND**

WESTERN STATES WILD TURKEY WORKSHOP

7-9 April 2025

South Padre Island, Texas



**HOSTED BY TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT
AND THE NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION**

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ATTENDEES

Province	Alberta Conservation Association	Doug Manzer (virtual)
Province	Alberta Conservation Association	Mike Verhage (virtual)
State	Arizona	Rick Langley
State	California	Katherine Murphy (virtual)
State	Idaho	Jeff Knetter
State	Kansas	Caleb Durbin
State	Nebraska	Carlie Saline
State	Nebraska	Kent Fricke
State	New Mexico	Casey Cardinal (virtual)
State	Oklahoma	Marcus Thibodeau
State	Oregon	Mikal Cline (virtual)
State	Texas	Jason Hardin
State	Texas	Kyle Hand
State	Utah	Heather Talley
State	Wyoming	Brandon Werner
NWTF		Chuck Carpenter
NWTF		Patt Dorsey (virtual)
NWTF		Annie Farrell
NWTF		Clayton Lenk
NWTF		Jared McJunkin
NWTF		Krista Modlin
NWTF		David Nilonow
TFT		Jason Lupardus
LSU		Dr. Bret Collier
East Foundation		Landon Schofield



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**Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
Hilton Garden Inn South Padre Island Beachfront
7010 Padre Blvd, South Padre Island, TX 78597
&
East Foundation's El Sauz Ranch
Port Mansfield, Texas
April 7th – 9th (Central Standard)**

Monday April 7th

Evening Welcome Reception at Hilton Garden Inn South Padre Island
7010 Padre Blvd, South Padre Island, TX 78597 from 6pm to 9pm

Tuesday April 8th

7:30am – Depart for El Sauz Ranch

9:00am – 2:00pm

- El Sauz Ranch Tour
- Turkey trapping, banding, bleeding, and GPS-marking (demo if the birds cooperate)
- Lunch on-site
- History of Texas Wild Turkey Research

Return to Hilton Garder Inn South Padre Island

3:00pm - Texas Welcome and State Report (TPWD)

4:00pm - Adjourn

5:00pm - Optional Team Building (Fishing South Padre Island, 35-miles of undeveloped beach tour, other)

7:00pm – Optional – Group dinner

Wednesday April 9th

8:30am - State Reports

10:30 Break

11:00am – State Reports

12:00pm – Lunch

1:00pm - National Wild Turkey Federation Update (NWTF)

1:30pm – Turkeys for Tomorrow Update (TFT)

2:00pm – Business Meeting

- Old Business

- New Business

- Research Needs/Priorities

- 2026 Meeting Plans

4:00pm - Adjourn

5:00pm – Optional Team Building Fishing and/or Tours

7:00pm – Optional Group Dinner

State and Provincial Reports (alphabetical order)

ALBERTA CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION POPULATION STATUS REPORT – 2025

Western States Wild Turkey Technical Committee Meeting – April 7–9, 2025 South Padre Island, TX

Doug Manzer - Wildlife Program Manager

Mike Verhage – Project Leader

Project Name: Turkey Surveys and Population Augmentation

Primary ACA Staff on Project: Paige Asplund, Trinie Chisholm, Trevor Council, Brad Downey, Stefanie Fenson, Jeff Forsyth, Easton Fritz, Kevin Gardiner, John Hallett, Jalen Hulit, Tyler Johns, Michael Jokinen, Paul Jones, Kris Kendell, Julie Landry-DeBoer, Megan Langfield, Doug Manzer, Kade McCormick, Susan Peters, Emily Purvis, Corey Rasmussen, Amanda Rezansoff, Dayce Rhodes, Phil Rose, Michael Uchikura, Jaclyn Vanderfluit, and Mike Verhage

Partnerships

Alberta Animal Health

British Columbia Animal Health Centre

Calgary Fish & Game Association

Chin Ridge Seeds

City of Castlegar

Government of Alberta

Government of British Columbia

Hillcrest Fish & Game Association

Kalesnikoff Lumber Co. Ltd.

Landholders in southwestern Alberta

Lethbridge Fish & Game Association

Minister's Special License Raffle Funds Grants Program

Regional District of East Kootenay

Regional District of Kootenay Boundary

Sarcee Fish & Game Association

Trowelex Equipment Rentals & Sales (Harold Chernoff)

University of Guelph

Zone 1 – Southern Alberta Fish & Game Society

Key Findings

We contacted landowners across known wild turkey range to gather winter counts. Numbers were tracking down with an aggregate count of 840 in 2021, 792 in 2022, and 637 in 2023, however over the last two years, numbers slightly resurged in 2024 with 677 birds and then made a jump to 919 in early 2025.

We conducted an annual volunteer summer brood survey that, in 2024, had 23 respondents return a count of 39 hens with 83 poults for a ratio of 2.13 poults per hen. This sample size of replies is too low to assume the population is currently stable, although it is evidence of recruitment from within the population. A ratio above 2:1 is considered a threshold for a stable population.

We translocated 485 wild turkeys from southeastern British Columbia into southwestern Alberta from 2023 to 2025.

We translocated 126 turkeys from British Columbia into southwestern Alberta in early 2025. The birds were released in six locations to jump-start sub-populations.

We tested all captured wild turkeys that were destined for release in Alberta. Any birds that tested positive for disease agents were not released in Alberta.

Details

Wild turkeys were first translocated into Alberta in 1962 with 21 birds from South Dakota released in the Cypress Hills in the southeast corner of Alberta (GoA 2022). Since then, several introductions and relocations have occurred through southern Alberta with a hunting season initiated in the spring of 1991. The current population appears to be struggling, and this has led to the initiation of a wild bird translocation program beginning in early 2023.

We reached out to landowners in 2021 to monitor wild turkeys across their range in southwest Alberta. We divided the anticipated range into five zones and contacted ten or more landholders from each zone, primarily with ranching operations. We spoke with 118 landowners in winter 2021, and of these 44 reported an aggregate count of 840 turkeys. Many suggested that turkeys were more common in previous years, while in 2021 they were no longer present or occurred at sparse numbers. This count was 840 in 2021, 792 in 2022, down to 637 birds in 2023, then 677 in 2024, and up to 919 in early 2025. We do not know if this count is accurate, though we suspect it is a reasonable index for tracking the trend.

To gain more resolution with population trend we also initiated a poult survey in summer 2021. We requested the public to report counts of poults and hens in summer and early fall. Our sample sizes are low and therefore to be interpreted cautiously. Even so, the ratio of poults per hen over

the four years suggests recruitment has been low during this period (poults:hen – 1.46:1 in 2021, n=18; 0.97:1 in 2022, n=22; 1.60:1 in 2023, n=46; and 2.13:1 in 2024, n=23). A ratio above two poults per hen (i.e., 2:1) is considered the threshold for a stable population for wild turkeys.

We began translocating wild turkeys from British Columbia into southwestern Alberta to counteract the apparent population decline. We have translocated 485 birds to date, including 125 birds released at six sites in early 2025. This number is down from previous years, due to the positive test results for 49 birds that were not released in Alberta. We foresee the need to continue annual translocations for eight to ten more years and, as local population growth occurs, to also relocate surplus birds within Alberta to establish additional sub-populations. This strategy of using translocations along with relocations over extended periods (ten plus years) has proven to be a successful approach for building sustainable wild turkey populations in other jurisdictions.



Photo 1. Alberta Conservation Association staff members Mike Jokinen and Dayce Rhodes attaching a backpack satellite tag to an adult hen turkey in Castlegar, British Columbia. Photo: Mike Verhage



Photo 2. Before released in Alberta, turkeys are temporarily held in holding pens, while Alberta Conservation Association staff await disease test results in Castlegar, British Columbia. Photo: Mike Jokinen

ARIZONA WILD TURKEY POPULATION STATUS REPORT - 2025

Western States Wild Turkey Technical Committee Meeting – April 7-9, 2025 South Padre Island, TX

Rick Langley – Wildlife Program Manager
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POPULATION STATUS

Merriam's turkey populations in Arizona seem to be stabilizing in most locations while some populations appear to be increasing. Although we do not have a good way to estimate turkey numbers, Merriam's turkeys are estimated between 25,000 and 30,000 in number, and Gould's turkeys number around 1,500. Gould's turkey numbers continue to increase within the available habitat in their range and are expanding into lower desert riparian areas outside of their typical mountainous riparian habitat.

Spring "gobbler" surveys for Gould's turkey are conducted in southern Arizona's "Sky Islands" each year. The number of mountain ranges surveyed, and the number of routes in each range, varies slightly from year to year, but the number of Gould's observed from year to year remains fairly consistent.

In 2024, seven mountain ranges were surveyed (of 10 known occupied). A total of 69 routes were run, for a total of 562 turkeys observed. The year prior one less mountain range was surveyed, fewer routes were run, but the number observed was similar (n=538). While overall numbers were similar, totals can vary significantly each year depending on location of flocks at time of survey and number of routes run.

REPRODUCTION

Merriam's turkey brood count data was collected in 17 game management units (GMU) across the state in 2024. A total of 1,605 turkeys were classified (up from 888 in 2024). Of the observations recorded in those 17 GMU's, only 4 units recorded 10 or more groups. The average poult:hen (2.24) ratio was only calculated on the data from 3 units that recorded observations greater than 100 turkeys. These data are not statistically significant, but they can be an indicator of the reproduction trend for this year. Reproduction/recruitment rates improved after 2 years of extreme drought in 2020 and 2021. We are working to improve this data collection as it is the only technique we currently must evaluate recruitment.

HARVEST

Harvest data used to be collected through a voluntary hunter questionnaire mailed to a subset of permit holders, but it mainly focuses on hunt success. Some age and sex data is collected through field-check data but is very limited. The hunt questionnaire was modified for Fall 2012 and the question was added to determine if the harvested bird was bearded or not and how long that beard was. This will give additional age and sex data that may be used in future hunt guidelines and decision making. For Fall 2018, the Department moved to include a QR code on the back of all tags, of which a hunter could scan and submit their hunt results. This resulted in dismal results with only a 3.7% return rate from hunters. The Department has gone back to mailing cards to hunters and sending emails to tag holders, which has resulted in increased return rates (>50%) and improved quality of data.

Spring Turkey Season

For Gould's turkeys, a total of 76 permits across 8 management units were issued via a lottery draw system for the 2024 spring hunt. Most units have an extremely high hunt success rate ranging from 67-100% and an average of 90% hunt success. Average days/kill range from 1-3. We are offering 91 permits for Gould's turkeys in 2025.

There were 2 permits issued for Rio Grande turkeys in Arizona in 2024 and no birds were reported as harvested. No permits were offered for spring 2025.

The most permits ever offered in Arizona were 7,698 permits spring 2011. Spring 2023 permits for Merriam's included 4,859 permits in stratified hunts and 340 youth permits. In 2024, we offered 4,692 permits in stratified hunts and 340 youth permits. In 2025 we are offering 4,872 permits in stratified hunts and 340 youth permits. There are 9 units that are open to youth non-permit tags (available over-the-counter) and 6 units that are open to archery non-permit tags (available over-the-counter).

Spring 2023 hunt success averaged 24% for the stratified hunts and youth hunts averaged 21%. Hunter days were 13,816 and the average days per kill is 16.2. We saw a decline in hunter days, an increase in average hunt success and a decrease in days per kill from 2022. Spring 2024 hunt success averaged 30%.

Fall Turkey Season

There are no fall hunts for Gould's turkeys.

There were 3,855 permits issued for Merriam's turkeys in the Fall 2023 season, down from 4,620 permits in 2022. Further reductions were recommended for Fall 2024, down to 3,550 any turkey permits. Average hunt success in 2023 ranged from 11 to 62% but the mean was 34%. Hunter days were 8,076 and average days per kill was 11. We saw an increase in hunt success and a decrease in days/kill. Fall 2024 turkey harvest data was not available at the time this summary was submitted.

HUNTING INCIDENTS

There have been no reported hunting incidents in Arizona in recent years.

RESEARCH

There are no ongoing research projects in Arizona, but we are actively monitoring translocated turkeys with GPS transmitters. A state-wide large-scale monitoring project for wild turkey is being developed. We are also evaluating the use of an acclimation or soft-release pen for translocations. After 2 years of using this process, we are very encouraged with the resulting lower mortality rates and flocks remaining more cohesive after the release. We have also deployed a handful of GPS transmitters on turkeys in our source populations and plan to expand that in the coming years.

Telemetry work completed in 2017-18 resulted in 4 new publications on Gould's turkey.

The first focuses on roosting habitat. The citation is:

Bakner, N. W., Fyffe, N., Oleson, B., Smallwood, A., Heffelfinger, J. R., Chamberlain, M. J., and Collier, B. A.. 2022. Roosting ecology of Gould's wild turkeys in southeastern Arizona. *Journal of Wildlife Management* 86:e22277. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jwmg.22277>

The second focuses on habitat selection and movement ecology of translocated Gould's. The citation for this article is:

Cohen, B. S., Oleson, B., Fyffe, N., Smallwood, A., Bakner, N., Nelson, S., Chamberlain, M. J., and Collier, B. A.. 2022. Movement, spatial ecology, and habitat selection of translocated Gould's wild turkeys. *Wildlife Society Bulletin* 46:e1270. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wsb.1270>

The third was on roost site selection. The citation is:

Bakner, N. W., N. Fyffe, B. Oleson, A. Smallwood, J. R. Heffelfinger, M. J. Chamberlain, and B. A. Collier. 2022. Roosting ecology of Gould's wild turkeys in southeastern Arizona. *Journal of Wildlife Management* e22277. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jwmg.22277>

The fourth and most recent publication describes habitat selected by Gould's turkey as influenced by landcover type and topographical features. The citations for this article is:

Ulrey, E.E., Wightman, P.H., Bakner, N.W. *et al.* Habitat selection of Gould's wild turkeys in southeastern Arizona. *Sci Rep* 13, 18639 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-023-45684-1>

REGULATION/LEGISLATION CHANGES

There are no legislative changes related to turkey hunting, but a change was approved in the most recent hunt guidelines package to allow an alternative set of fall hunt dates. The alternative dates would be in November around the Thanksgiving holiday. Arizona has also implemented an E-tagging program. This will allow hunters the ability to electronically report a harvested turkey and "tag" it electronically. This could increase harvest reporting and the quality of data in the future.

A rule change has also been approved to allow atlatls as a legal method for taking turkeys. The Department has not yet been implemented.

EMERGING OR EVOLVING ISSUES

HPAI is of concern, but we have seen no indication that it has affected turkeys in Arizona. Blood and swabs have been collected from a number of turkeys during recent captures and translocations. The results were negative.

Samples from Gould's turkeys are submitted each year to be tested for lymphoproliferative disease. None of the samples have tested positive yet. LPDV has been detected in Merriam's turkeys for several years.

Access to occupied turkey habitat continues to be a challenge in southern Arizona in Gould's turkey habitat. Many roads to public lands cross through private property and are blocked at those access points. While some progress opening gates onto land held in trust by the State of Arizona has occurred, lands owned and managed by the US Forest Service continue to be

difficult to access. In some cases, legal access has been designated, but roads have yet to be built, rendering the huntable areas still inaccessible by vehicle.

RELEVANT LINKS

Relevant information such as regulations booklets, hunter questionnaire reports, and survey summaries can be found on the AZGFD website www.azgfd.com.

MISCELLANEOUS

Translocations

Arizona remains active in the translocation program. In 2025, Region 1 captured and translocated a total of 32 turkeys to Region 3. 10 turkeys were fitted with GPS transmitters and released in GMU 19B, as part of those translocations to look at mortality and dispersal/movement.

While Merriam's populations are relatively stable, the established Gould's populations in southeastern Arizona have shown strong recruitment and continue to grow. This has been a great conservation success story for the Department, NWTF and wild turkey management.

CALIFORNIA WILD TURKEY POPULATION STATUS REPORT – 2025

Western States Wild Turkey Technical Committee Meeting – April 7-9, 2025

South Padre Island, TX

Katherine Miller, Matt Meshriy, and Ian Dwight - Environmental Scientists

Mario Klip, Environmental Program Manager

1010 Riverside Parkway / West Sacramento, CA 95605



POPULATION STATUS

The first introduction of wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) to California was to Santa Cruz Island in 1877. Following the original introduction, four subspecies of wild turkey have been released into the state: Gould's (*M. g. mexicana*), Merriam's (*M. g. merriami*), Rio Grande (*M. g. intermedia*), and Eastern (*M. g. silvestris*). Currently, Rio Grande wild turkeys dominate the lower elevation oak woodlands, while local populations of Merriam's have become established in higher elevations across northern California.

The Department currently does not conduct statewide monitoring of wild turkeys, because data from the North America Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) for California and neighboring states can be used to monitor statewide trends. We calculated an index of abundance (birds/route) and developed maps using the Inverse Distance Weighting tool in ArcGIS v. 10.3.1. We calculated 5-year (rolling) averages, e.g. 2016 is an average of 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018 (Fig. 1). We clipped the maps to the state boundary and extracted abundance values from random points ($n = 50$). We then used those values to estimate population trends for wild turkey in California (Fig. 2). We included data from 2022 and 2023 as individual years rather than 5-year averages, as 2023 is the last year for which data is available. The BBS was cancelled in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We will continue to update the model with 2024 data when it is available.

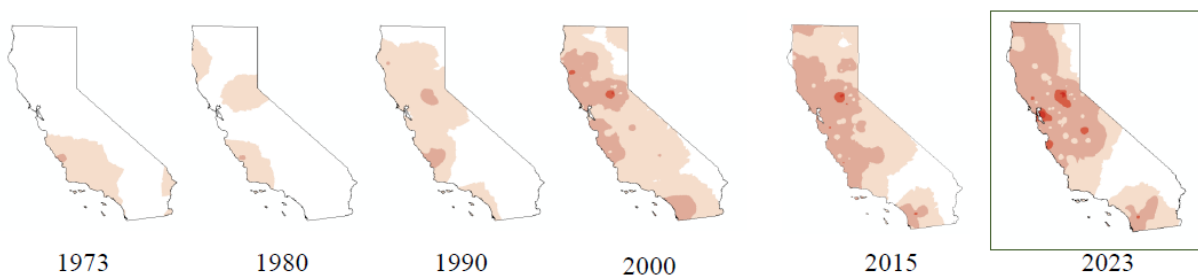


Figure 1: Index of Abundance maps for wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) in California. The maps represent 5-year rolling averages, e.g. 2015 is an average of 2013 through 2017. The map outlined in black represents 2023 data alone (i.e. not a rolling average).

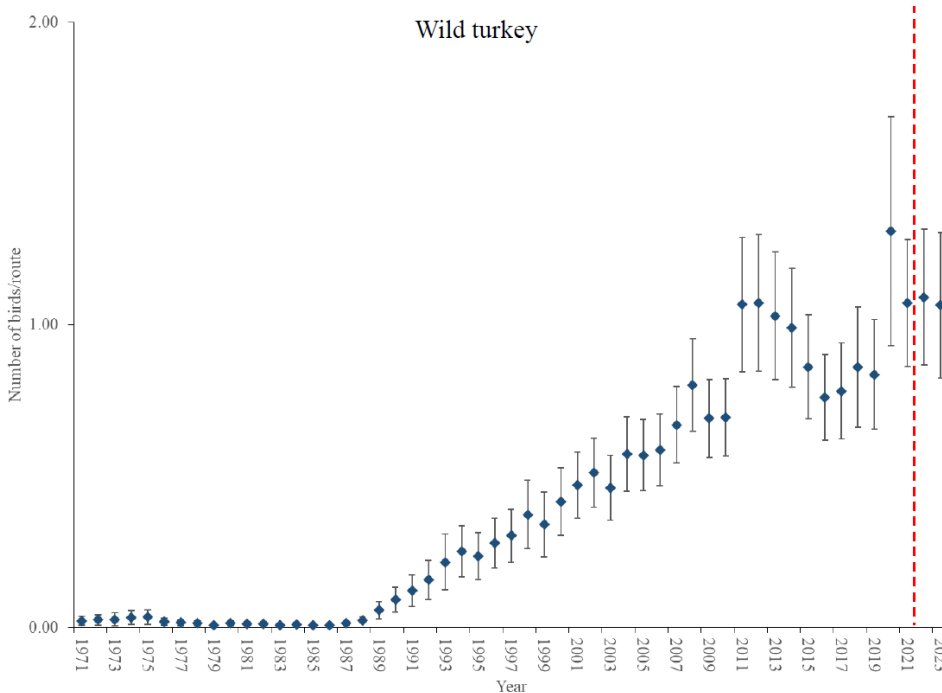


Figure 2: Wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) population trend in California. We extracted values at random locations ($n = 50$) from 5-year rolling averages. The red dashed line delineates that the last 5-year rolling average is for 2021; for 2022 and 2023, individual annual data is shown.

The Department also estimated regional trends for wild turkey in California (Fig. 3) for four of the California State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) regions. Three regions (South Coast, Modoc, and Desert;) are not included here as the average number of birds/route has consistently been < 1 . Of the four regions shown, number of turkeys increased in the North Coast. It will take time for the effects of fires in 2020–2021 to show changes in abundance indices.

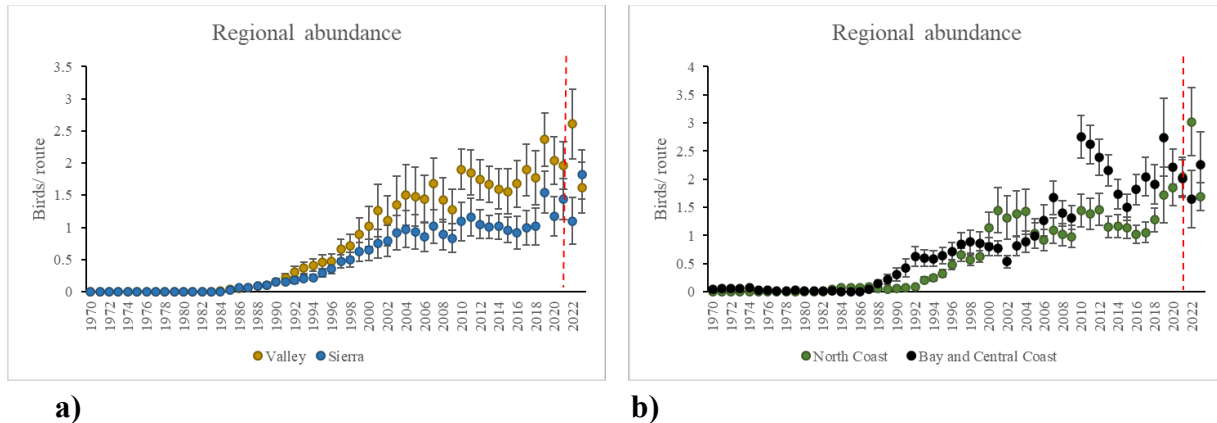


Figure 3: Wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) population trend for four regions of California. We extracted five-year (rolling) averages of indices of abundance at random points in each region as follows: Fig. 3a: Great Valley ($n = 22$) and Sierra ($n = 32$); Fig. 3b: North Coast ($n = 29$) and Bay and Central Coast ($n = 17$).

HARVEST

The Department began collecting harvest information in 1948 using mail-in surveys distributed to hunters. The first season for wild turkey was established in 1968, and beginning in 1992 the hunters were asked about fall and spring turkey hunt effort separately. In 2017, the Department conducted the first on-line survey for resident upland game birds in the 2016-2017 hunting season. We closed the survey prior to the Spring 2017 turkey season, with the expectation that hunters would recall their hunt effort more accurately. We also expected that spring wild turkey hunters would recall their hunt effort for a longer period. Therefore, for wild turkey, we asked for information on Spring 2016 harvest and Fall 2016 harvest. This caused confusion for some turkey hunters, therefore we modified the next survey to follow the hunt year.

In the summer of 2019, we conducted a survey of the 2018-2019 hunting season. For wild turkey, this was split into Fall 2018 and Spring 2019. This followed the previous survey's on-line format, with a random sample of upland game bird hunters. These hunters were emailed a link to the survey. We held the survey open for two months and sent out two reminder emails. We extrapolated responses for harvest and hunter effort based on the total number of hunters with upland game bird validations in California. We completed additional surveys in 2020–2021 and 2022-2023 to continue monitoring trends in harvest annually.

Spring Turkey Season

As expected, spring hunt effort and harvest was higher than the preceding winter. In the spring of 2023, an estimated 25,509 hunters harvested 17,014 bearded birds over 106,782 hunt days. Most birds were harvested from Butte, Sonoma, and Eldorado counties, followed by Tehama, Yuba, and Yolo counties (Fig. 4).

Wild turkey Spring 2023

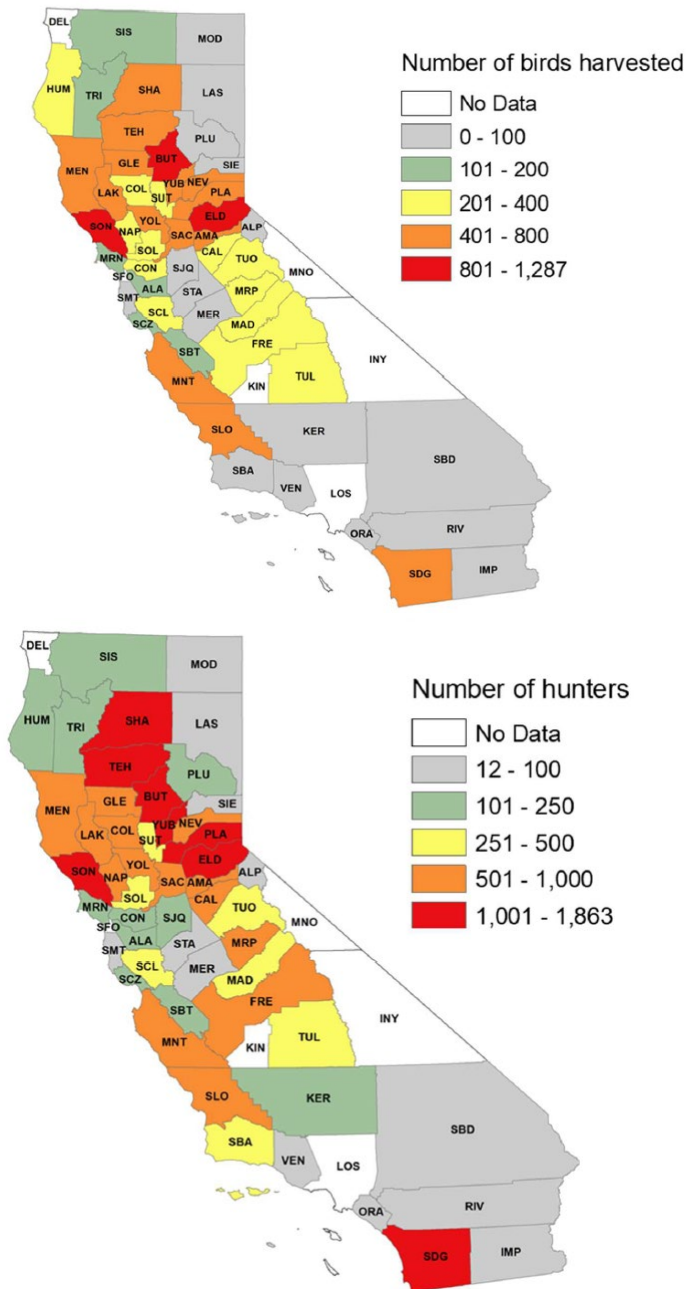


Fig. 4: Estimated number of hunters and number of birds harvested for wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) in the Spring 2023 season.

Fall Turkey Season

In the fall of 2022, an estimated 11,719 hunters harvested 5,492 birds over 38,172 hunt days. Hunters were more successful in Yuba and Ventura counties, followed by Tuolumne and Butte counties (Fig. 5). Hunt effort was spread throughout the state but was highest in Yuba, El Dorado, and San Diego counties (Fig. 5).

Wild turkey Fall 2022

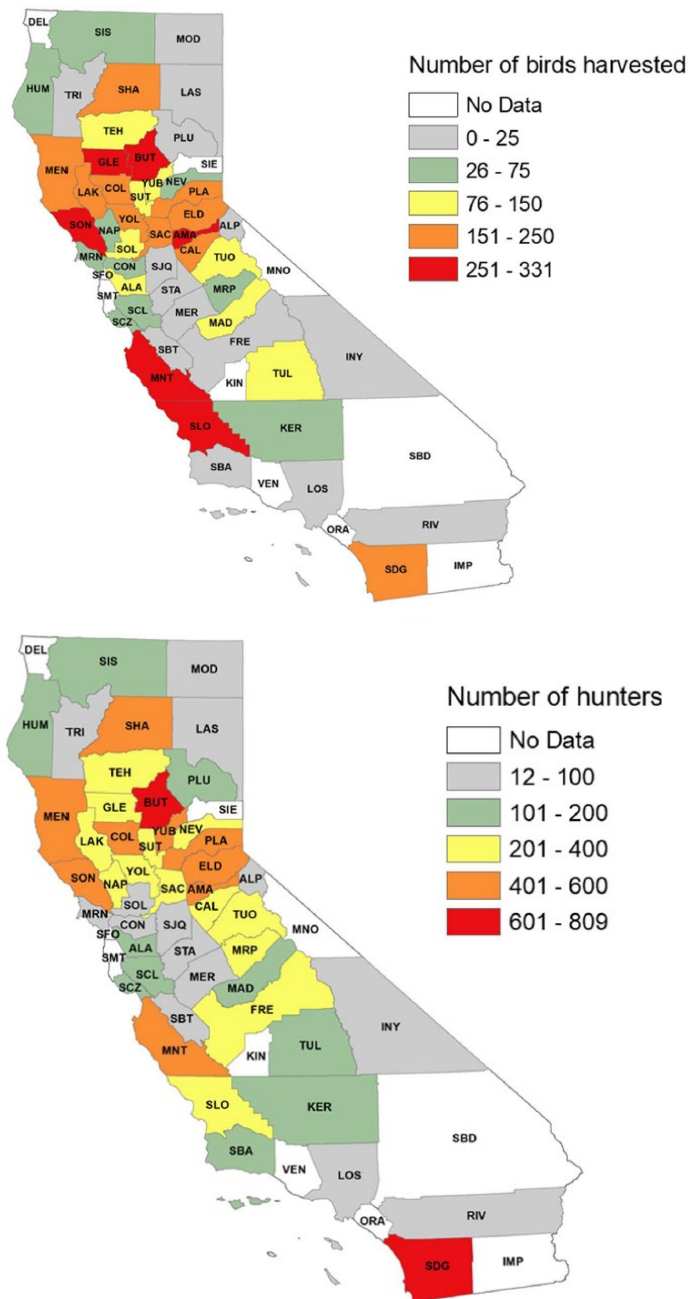


Fig. 5: Estimated number of hunters and number of birds harvested for wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) in the Fall 2022 season.

Fall and spring wild turkey harvest and hunters decreased slightly from both the 2018–2019 and 2020–2021 estimates (Fig. 6), likely attributed to a long-term decline in hunting compounded by a severe wildfire season in 2020 that closed many national forests, forcing hunters to change plans. While the forests largely were open by the time Fall Turkey Season opened, it affected both abundance and dispersal of wild turkeys, and hunters faced challenges in finding birds. Staff will conduct a 2024–2025 harvest survey, though details are being determined.

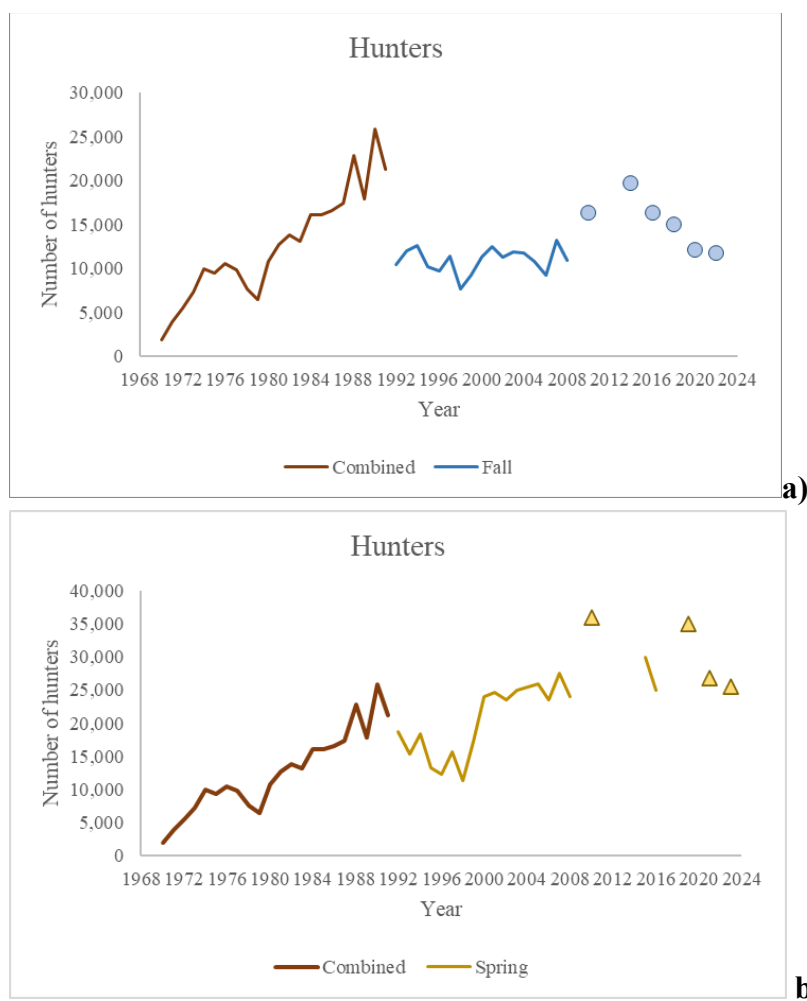


Figure 6: Trend in wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) hunters in fall (a), and spring (b). The Department began asking hunters about their effort and take for the separate seasons in 1994.

HUNTING INCIDENTS

From 2012 to 2021, there were 5 turkey-related hunter casualty incidents. One incident happened on public land and involved a hunter discharging their shot gun when another hunter was out of the line of site. In 2022, there were two hunting related incidents, both nonfatal involved hunting wild turkey.

RESEARCH

Mark-recapture at Upper Butte Basin WA

Department staff began trapping wild turkeys at Upper Butte Basin WA in 2015. During the first four years, staff banded turkeys ($n = 89$) with butt-end style bands, with 4.49% recovery rate (hunter harvest). During the 2017 fall turkey season, a hunter located a butt-end turkey band on the ground that appeared to have been pried open. Starting in 2019, staff fitted wild turkeys ($n = 196$, 2019–2025) with both a butt-end band and a rivet band. Recovery across 2019-2025 was 23%, thus band returns increased dramatically after rivet bands were first applied.

In addition to mark-recapture and harvest information, trail camera photos showed mature male turkeys that had been fitted with both butt-end and rivet bands returning to the trap site with only a rivet band. In February 2020, a mature male bird was captured and fitted with both a butt-end and a rivet style band; the bird was recaptured seven days later and was already missing the butt-end band. Six of the rivet-banded turkeys that have been harvested had only rivet bands at the time they were killed. All recoveries were from the wildlife area, or nearby.

REGULATION/LEGISLATION CHANGES

The Department implemented the most recent regulatory change specific to wild turkey in 2016, in regards to broadhead sizes (California Code of Regulations Title 14 Section 311(e)(1). There are no recent or upcoming regulatory changes specific to turkeys at this time.

Assembly Bill 2697 created the Nesting Bird Habitat Incentive Program. This subsidy program will provide incentives for farmers in the Great Valley (Central Valley) to leave areas fallow for nesting birds. The focus of the project will be pheasant and waterfowl. Where the fields are in relation to the trees may positively impact turkeys as well. The funding of this program will come from Assembly Bill 614, which adds \$10 to both the waterfowl and upland game bird validations.

Senate Bill 772 would raise the age of junior hunters to 18 years old, beginning July 1st, 2024, and ending July 1st 2029. It would require the director of California Fish and Wildlife to submit a report to the Legislature on or before October 1, 2027, that evaluates the effect of this change on participation in hunting. It was introduced in the California Senate on Feb 17th, 2023.

Table 1: Wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) banding, recapture, and harvest recovery rates at Upper Butte Basin Wildlife Area, Glenn and Butte counties, California, USA. Gray-shaded cells indicate years in which rivet bands were used instead of aluminum butt-end bands.

		Recoveries by year											
	Number of turkeys banded	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Total recovered	% recovered same year	
2015	22										0	0	
2016	29	2		1							3	0	
2017	No banding										0	0	
2018	38			1							1	0	
2019	13				2	1	1	1			5	0	
2020	53				6	8	8	3			25	11.3	
2021	61						4	1	2		7	0	
2022	No banding										0	0	
2023	38							5	1	1	6	13.1	
2024	23								1		1		
2025	8										0	0	
Total banded	285										48		

RELEVANT LINKS

Harvest surveys:

<http://wildlife.ca.gov/Hunting/Upland-Game-Birds#22503332-harvest-data>

For more information, contact:

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COLORADO WILD TURKEY POPULATION STATUS REPORT - 2025

Western States Wild Turkey Technical Committee Meeting – April 7–9, 2025 South Padre Island, TX

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POPULATION STATUS

Colorado Parks and Wildlife does not officially estimate population numbers of wild turkey, as we do not have a census for wild turkeys across the state in a repeatable manner. However, for reference, we believe that there are more than 30,000 wild turkeys in Colorado at present.

HARVEST

2024 Spring Turkey Season

Colorado estimates spring harvest annually, via voluntary phone and email surveys, for two types of licenses – limited and unlimited, by cooperating with an external vendor. For 2024, spring limited harvest is estimated at 568 ± 55 (516 – 625). Colorado's unlimited harvest is estimated to be $5,335 \pm 539$ (4,822 – 5,902). Overall, Colorado estimates an overall combined harvest of $5,903 \pm 556$ wild turkeys taken in Colorado during the 2024 spring season.

2024 Fall Turkey Season

Colorado estimates the 2024 fall turkey harvest at $1,557 \pm 131$ (1,431 – 1,694).

MISCELLANEOUS

Colorado is home to Merriam's and Rio Grande wild turkeys. Merriam's are considered native to Colorado and occupy the mountainous regions of Colorado west of Interstate 25 and the pinyon-juniper canyon country of southeastern Colorado. Merriam's wild turkey range extends north along the front-range of the Rocky Mountains, west along the I-70 corridor, into northwest Colorado along the White River and are common in southwest Colorado. Rio Grande wild turkeys were introduced into Colorado and primarily occupy the cottonwood riparian systems of

the eastern plains region, in addition to the Rio Grande River in the San Luis Valley. Distribution is segregated in most cases although in a few areas, Rio Grande and Merriam's occupy adjacent habitats.

Large portions of the state do not provide suitable habitat for wild turkeys, and while the locations of small, pioneering populations are frequently reported in previously uninhabited areas. Some of these disappear in a few years, but it is not at all uncommon to find viable turkey populations in non-traditional areas. For over a decade, populations of Merriam's have been stable or increasing, with the last major winter mortality factor occurring in 2006-07. CPW believes that the statewide population continues at or near a historical high. Rio Grande populations were also reduced by drought impacts as recently as 2012-13, and again in 2020-2022. In northern Colorado, some areas experienced winter for the first time in 20 years in 2022-23. Turkeys were subjected to frozen snow cover for approximately 90 days and then flooding conditions while hens were nesting. Correspondingly, populations in northern Colorado declined by ~ 25%. Those populations appear to have recovered as of Spring 2025.

IDAHO WILD TURKEY POPULATION STATUS REPORT – 2025

Western States Wild Turkey Technical Committee Meeting – April 7–9, 2025 South Padre Island, TX

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POPULATION STATUS

Wild turkeys are not native to Idaho but were first introduced in 1961. Since then, over 6,000 Merriam's, Eastern, Rio Grande, and hybrid wild turkeys were trapped from ten states (including Idaho) and released in Idaho; over 4,000 of these turkeys were of the Merriam's subspecies. These three subspecies have been translocated across the state and have readily intergraded; consequently, whether pure genetic strains of any of these subspecies persist in Idaho is unclear.

Idaho has not established a method to monitor population size. However, Eriksen et al. (2015) estimated population size from spring harvest estimates and a population estimate constant (0.131); harvest was divided by the constant. If applied to Idaho, the spring population size fluctuated between 48,800 and 55,100 birds from 2020-2024; the average population size was 52,600 birds and the trend has increased since 2017.

In general, wild turkeys occupy available suitable habitat within Idaho (Figure 1). However, turkeys are still trapped and translocated, primarily to relieve depredation or nuisance issues. During winter 2025, turkeys were trapped and translocated only within the Magic Valley and Southeast regions to alleviate conflict issues.

REPRODUCTION

To improve wild turkey population monitoring and reporting to provide reliable information on population trends, Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) launched an online wild turkey brood and distribution survey (aka Turkey Tracker) in 2024. Response from the public was encouraging, with over 1,000 observations reported during July and August. Ideally, participation in this survey effort remains high and IDFG can track trends through time and help, along with harvest data, inform season-setting recommendations.

Statewide poult-per-hen ratios were 3.98 and poults-per-brood ratios were 4.79. The proportion of hens observed with broods was 0.83, and the male:female ratio was 0.41.

HARVEST

2024 Spring Turkey Season

In Idaho, the general spring season occurs April 15 – May 25; a youth-only season occurs April 8-14. In spring 2024, an estimated 19,900 hunters harvested approximately 6,800 wild turkeys during general season hunts, and an estimated 500 hunters harvested approximately 200 wild turkeys during controlled hunts. Success rates (harvest/hunters) were 34% and 40% for general and controlled hunt seasons, respectively. Over the last 10 years an average of 16,100 hunters harvested an estimated 5,800 wild turkeys during spring seasons (Figure 2). The bag limit is 2 bearded or male turkeys during spring seasons.

2023 Fall Turkey Season

In fall 2023, an estimated 8,300 hunters harvested approximately 4,200 wild turkeys during general season hunts, and an estimated 180 hunters harvested approximately 70 wild turkeys during controlled hunts. Success rates (harvest/hunters) were 51% for general seasons and 39% for controlled hunts. From 2014 to 2023, an average of 5,900 hunters harvested an estimated 3,100 wild turkeys during fall seasons (Figure 3). Bag limits during fall general seasons vary by region of the state, but the bag limit is 1 bird for controlled hunt seasons. Hunters may use unfilled spring tags during fall general seasons.

RESEARCH

In recent years, many states across historic wild turkey range have documented significant population declines after periods of apparent population growth. In the Panhandle Region of Idaho, wild turkey populations appear to have steadily increased over the past ten years. It is necessary to gather baseline information on wild turkey populations in north Idaho.

We are currently investigating wild turkey reproduction ecology and cause-specific mortality to better inform wild turkey harvest and population management. In 2024, we deployed 30 satellite transmitters on hens to determine nest initiation and peak incubation dates, and annual survival. An additional 67 males (31 toms and 36 jakes) were banded. In 2025, we deployed 26 transmitters; 16 redeployments and 10 new transmitters.

REGULATION/LEGISLATION CHANGES

Turkey seasons are set biennially in Idaho. They were last set in January 2024 and no substantial changes were made to seasons.

EMERGING OR EVOLVING ISSUES

Idaho has one of the fastest growing human populations in the country. With this population growth and associated development, it is likely wild turkey nuisance and depredation issues will continue to increase. The Idaho Wild Turkey Management Plan (Idaho Department of Fish and Game 2022) identifies strategies to effectively respond to these issues.

RELEVANT LINKS

Idaho Wild Turkey Management Plan: https://idfg.idaho.gov/sites/default/files/idaho-wild-turkey-plan-2022_0.pdf

Wild Turkey Hunting Regulations: <https://idfg.idaho.gov/sites/default/files/seasons-rules-upland-turkey-2022-2023.pdf>

Wild Turkey Hunting in Idaho: <https://idfg.idaho.gov/hunt/turkey>

Wild Turkey Brood and Distribution Survey: <https://idfg.idaho.gov/wildlife/turkey/brood-survey>

LITERATURE CITED

Eriksen, R. E., T. W. Hughes, T. A. Brown, M. D. Akridge, K. B. Scott, and C. S. Penner. 2015. Status and distribution of wild turkeys in the United States: 2014 Status. Proceedings of the National Wild Turkey Symposium 11:7-18.

Idaho Department of Fish and Game. 2022. Idaho Wild Turkey Management Plan, 2022–2027. Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Boise, USA.

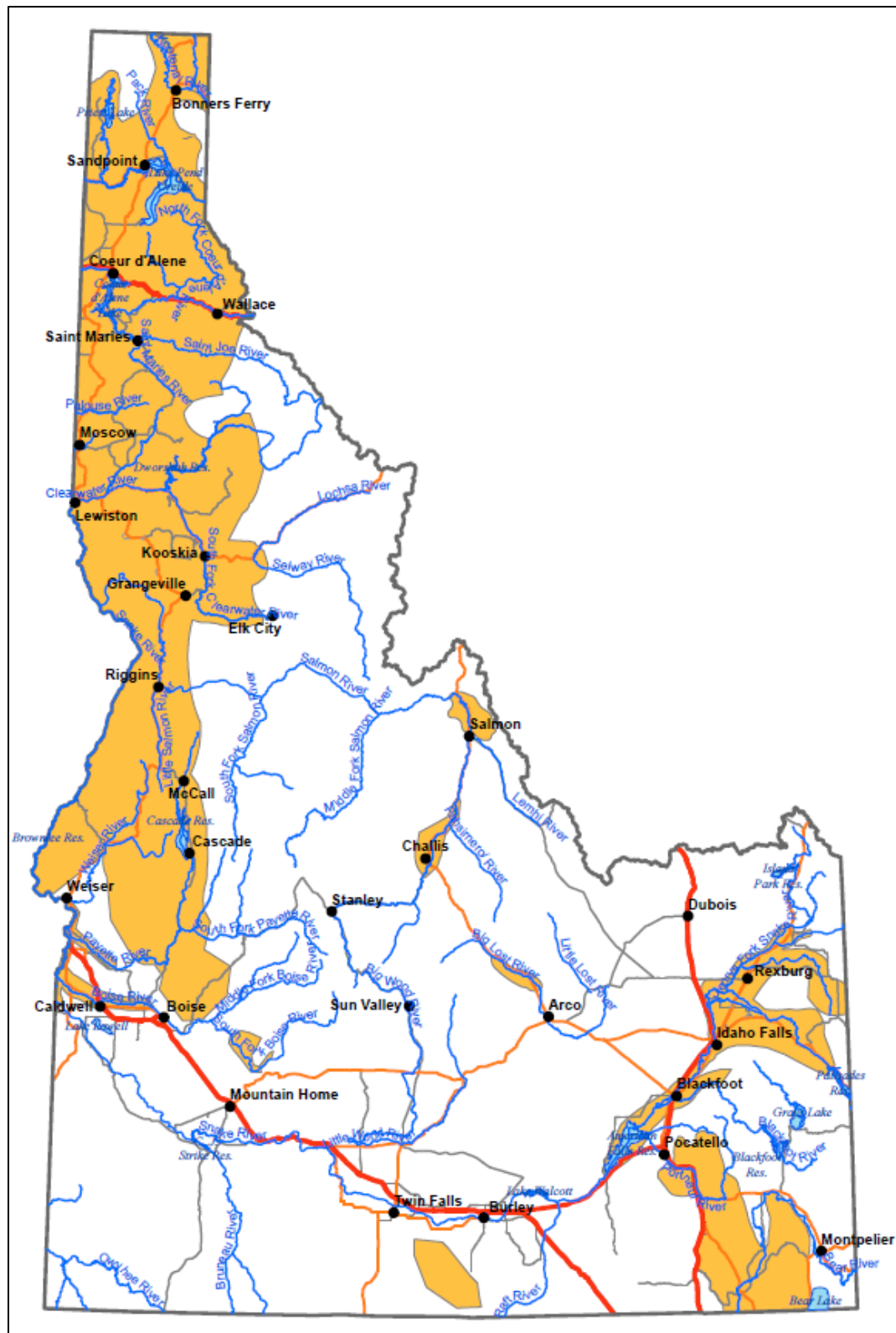


Figure 1. Wild turkey distribution in Idaho.

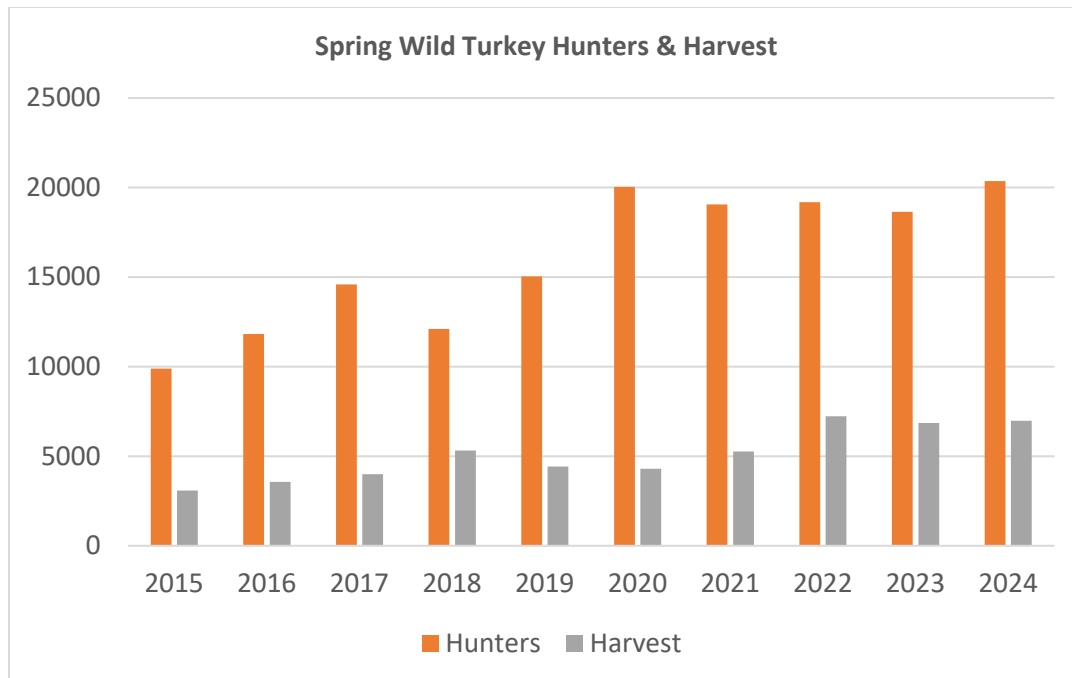


Figure 2. Estimated number of hunters and wild turkeys harvested during spring seasons in Idaho, 2015–2024.

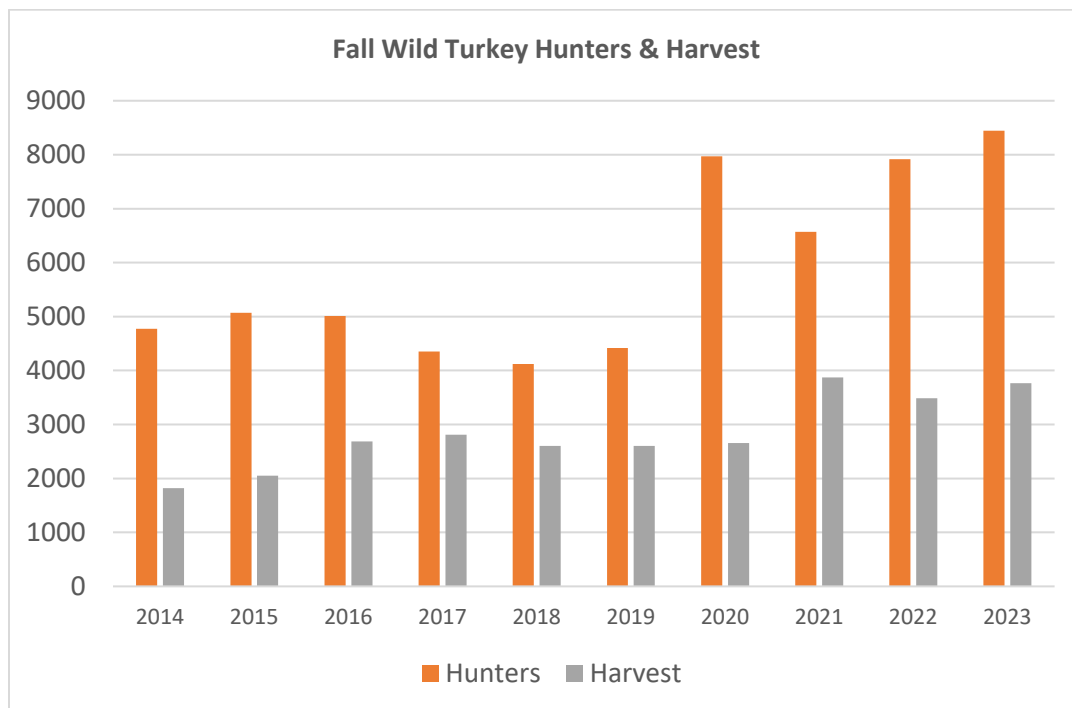


Figure 3. Estimated number of hunters and wild turkeys harvested during fall seasons in Idaho, 2014–2023.

KANSAS WILD TURKEY POPULATION STATUS REPORT – 2025

Western States Wild Turkey Technical Committee Meeting – April 7th – 9th, 2025 South Padre Island, TX

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POPULATION STATUS

Kansas has two primary subspecies: Rio Grande, which occur mainly in the western and central 2/3 of the state, and Eastern species, which occur on the eastern 1/3 of the state. Hybrid populations are present. The 2024 summer brood survey saw slight increases of 27% on statewide turkey per mile estimates after precipitation greatly improved production habitat following multiple years of drought (Fig. 1). These conditions allowed some units to see dramatic increases in production that were mirrored by many other game birds. While these improvements are welcomed, they were not enough to recover populations to levels observed historically given the long trend of poor recruitment.

REPRODUCTION

Turkey production has been trending upward in the last few years (Fig. 2). However, 2023 poults per hen data have been trending downward over the years but 2024 poults per hen data have not yet been assessed (Fig. 3).

HARVEST

2024 Spring Turkey Season

Kansas completes a post-season harvest survey of 10% of permit hunters. The 2024 Spring turkey harvest was better than the previous 5 years. The age and sex structure of the 2024 harvest was 87.2% adult gobblers, 12.5% jakes, and <0.01% bearded hens. Success rates were 51% compared to 2023 where it was 45%. Overall harvest decreased in the spring 2024 season with a total harvest of 11,135. However, we saw a decrease in total number of active hunters from last year given new non-resident permit quotas (**Fig. 4**). See table 1 & 4 for permit and harvest numbers.

Public hunting access is limited in Kansas with over 97% land being privately owned. Public land is supplemented with a Walk in access program (WIHA) that provides public access to private lands. Despite the limited amount of public access this land is relied upon disproportionately for turkey hunters with over 30% of hunters using either WIHA or Public Land. While over 30% of the hunting pressure occurred on public access only 14% of the harvest reported occurred on public access.

REGULATION/LEGISLATION CHANGES

Kansas Turkeys are managed according to 6 management units (Fig. 6). Kansas utilizes an adaptive harvest management plan to make recommendations on season and tag allotments on a unit-by-unit basis based on resident hunter success rates (Fig. 7). The fall season is currently suspended in all units. Currently residents are allowed 1 over the counter permit that is valid across all units except unit 4. Unit 4 permits are only available to resident hunters through a limited draw. Limited non-residents permits are unit specific and are available through a non-resident draw. Unsuccessful applicants receive a preference point toward future applications; non-residents can also purchase a preference point in lieu of an application. Overall success rates in the 2024 non-resident draw were 82%, see table 3 for non-resident draw results.

RESEARCH

KDWP is working on a statewide collaborative turkey research project with Kansas State University and the National Wild Turkey Federation to evaluate turkey population demography and ecology in Kansas. This information will be used to inform population models and harvest and habitat management decisions. In our first field season there were 297 hens fitted with GPS units and an additional 86 males fitted with leg bands. Some preliminary results from the first field season are as follows:

- Survival rate 0.637
- 304 nesting attempts with 18% overall success rate
- 54% of nests were in grassland habitats followed by 24% in forest
- Predator detections were highest in forest
- 5 of 56 banded males were harvested
- Black Walnut was the most common roost tree for broods at 33%
- Disease testing is ongoing, so far results include 4 of 31 birds positive for LPDV and 1 of 31 positive for REV
- 25-50 cm cover around nest
- Cicadas found in 76% of fecal samples.
- 93% of hens attempted a nest (on average 1.24 attempts per hen)
- 0.21 nest survival rate in the Eastern Region

- 0.28 nest survival rate in the Central Region
- 0.31 nest survival in the Western Region
- 48% of broods had at least one poult reach 28 days
- Potential nest predator numbers were recorded (Table 2)

EMERGING OR EVOLVING ISSUES

We have documented a few wild turkey related damage complaints. Some turkeys are being fed by people and then act aggressive towards other individuals.

RELEVANT LINKS

<https://ksoutdoors.com/Hunting/What-to-Hunt/Turkey>

MISCELLANEOUS

The KDWP Walk-In Hunting Areas (WIHA) program was initiated in 1995 and leases public hunting access to private lands. The program is popular among hunters and landowners and has expanded to over 1 million acres enrolled annually. Initially WIHA targeted pheasant hunting opportunity close to urban centers but since has expanded in scope and scale. Spring Turkey WIHA was added in 2001 and has grown dramatically. In 2024 there were 320,895 acres across 1,246 properties open during the spring turkey season. Payments vary based on access periods, habitat type, location in the state, etc. but currently the approximate price/acre is \$2.90 (\$0.30/ac - \$18/ac) and average tract size of 265 acres.

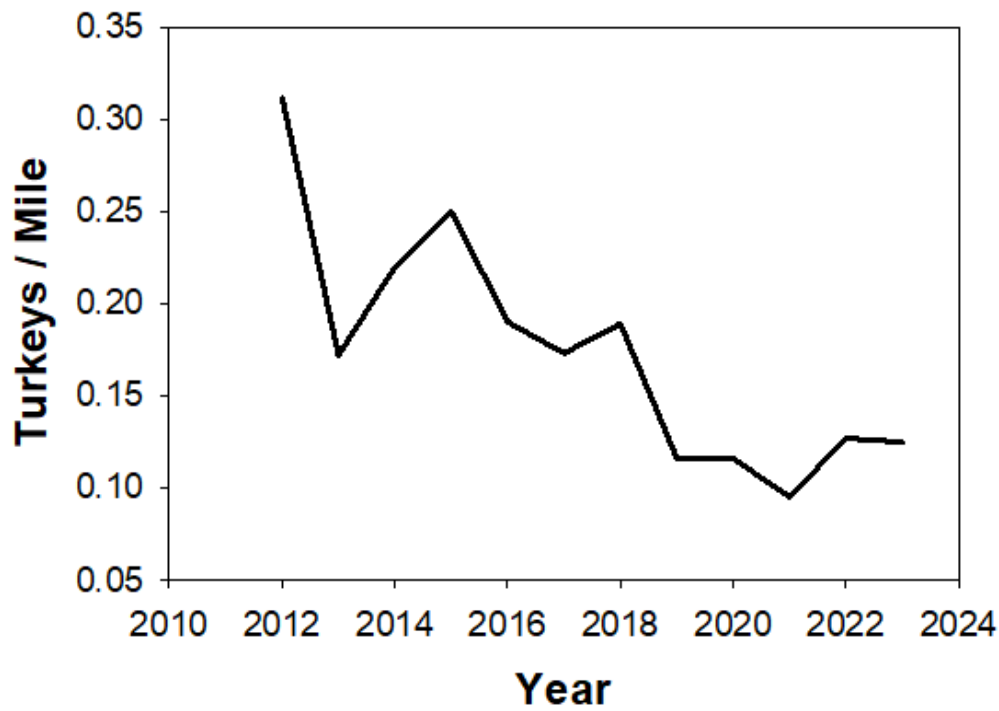


Figure 1. 2024 Summer Brood Survey Observations

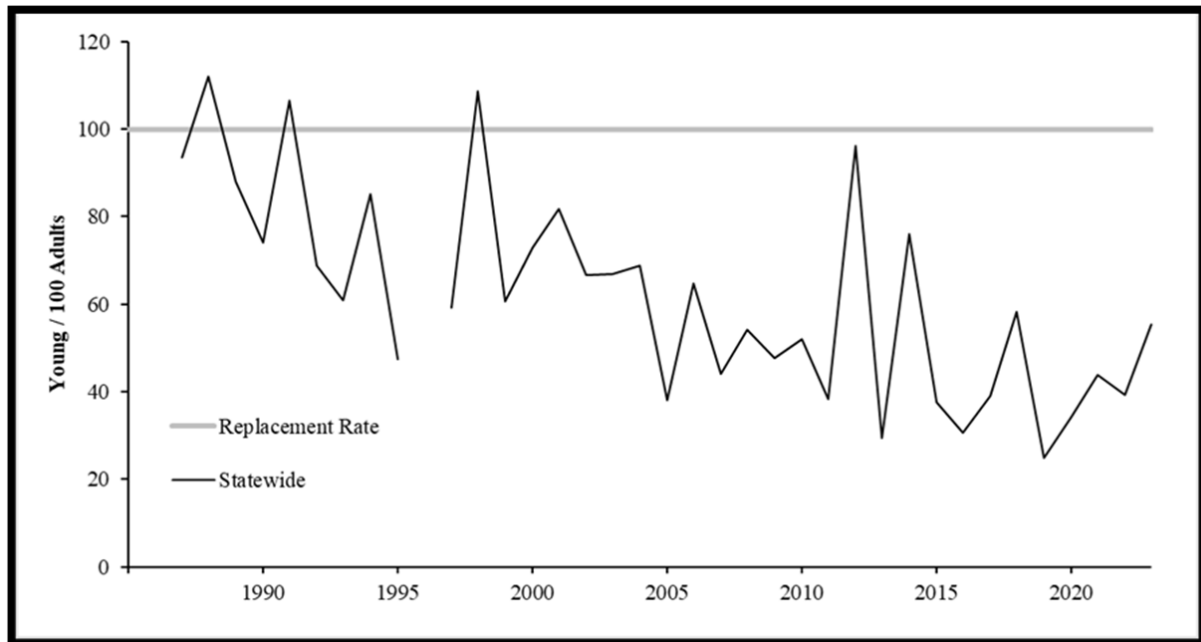


Figure 2. 2024 Summer Rural Mail Carrier Survey (Production Trends)

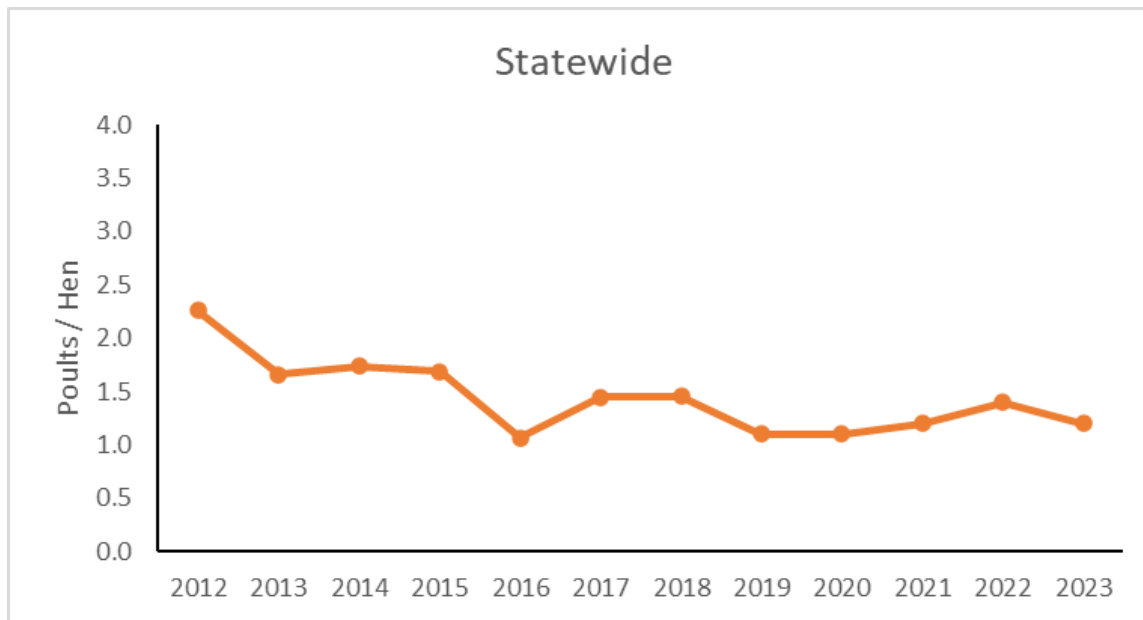


Figure 3. 2012 – 2023 Kansas Wild Turkey Poults per Hen data

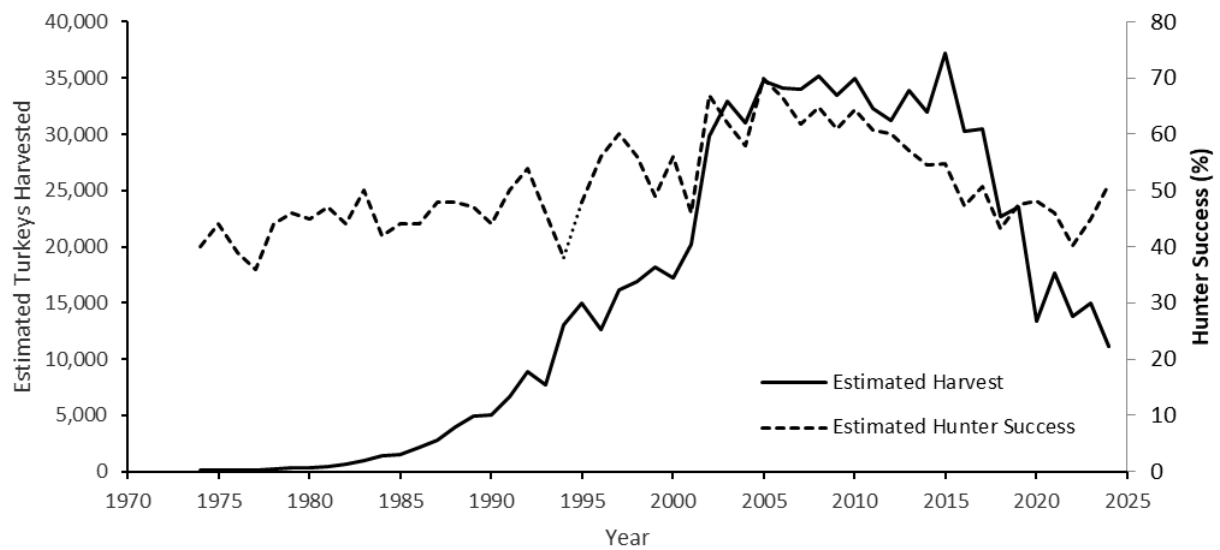


Figure 4. Estimated Wild Turkey Harvest and Hunter Success from 1970 – 2024

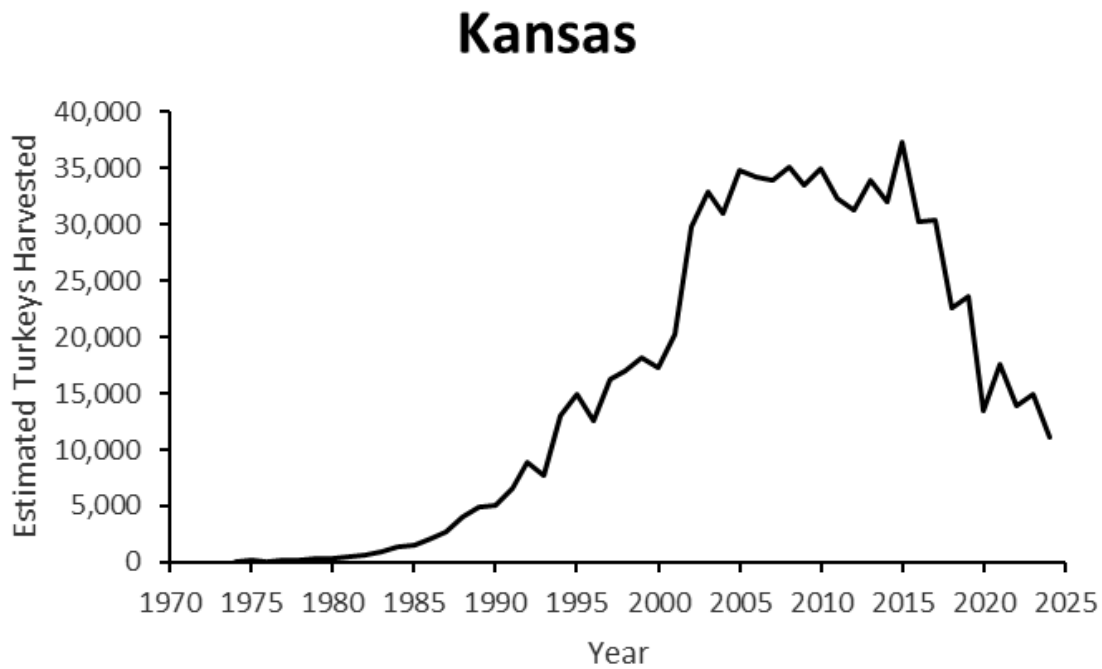


Figure 5. Total Kansas Spring Turkey Harvest

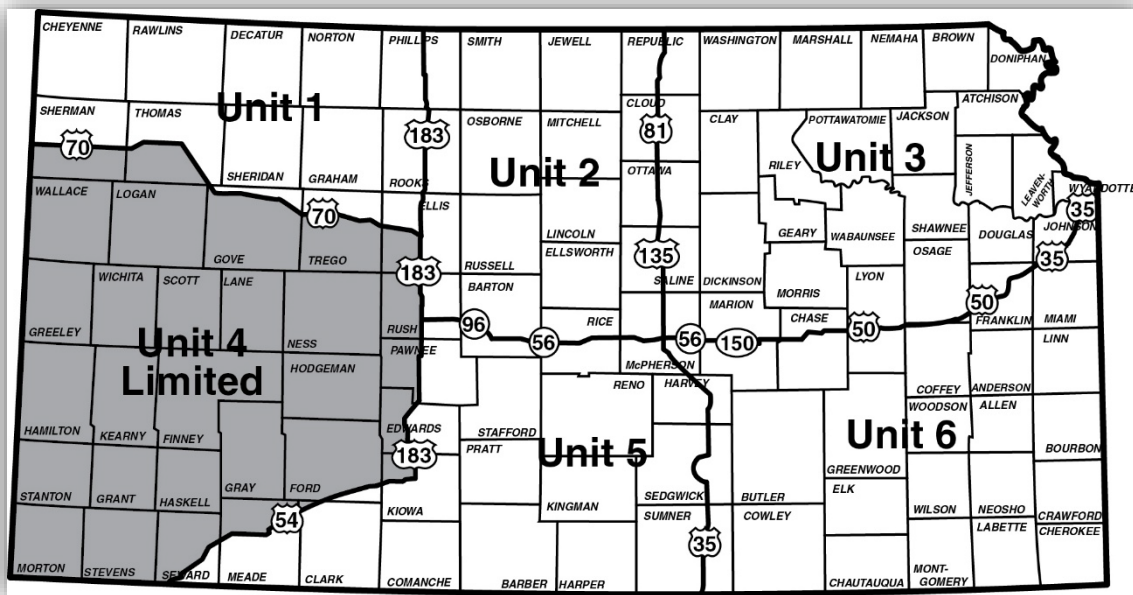


Figure 6. Kansas Wild Turkey Management Units

Regulation Packages	
A)	3 spring and 4 fall
B)	2 spring and 4 fall
C)	2 spring and 1 fall (most liberal package for Units 1 & 4)
D)	2 spring and no fall —or— 1 spring and 1 fall
E)	1 spring and no fall
E1)	1 spring and no fall, nonresident quota
F)	Resident-only limited draw spring (moving down) Quota Increase (moving up)
G)	Quota Reductions (moving down) Resident-only limited draw spring

Triggers:

1. Active resident hunter success must be $\geq 60\%$ for each of the previous 2 years and the percentage of the harvest composed of jakes must average $<25\%$ over the same period before upward movement recommended.
2. Active resident hunter success must be $\leq 55\%$ for 2 consecutive years before downward movement recommended.

Figure 7. Kansas Wild Turkey Harvest Strategy

Table 1. Spring and Fall Wild Turkey season # of permits and game tags sold, total harvest, and percentage of hunter success from 2019 – 2024.

Year	Spring			Fall			
	Permits & Game Tags	Total Harvest	Success (%)	Permits & Game Tags	Total Harvest	Hen Harvest (%)	Success (%)
2019	56,388	23,568	47	4,570	487	29	35
2020	32,324	13,404	46	3,459	506	45	20
2021	45,263	17,611	45	2,779	313	51	16
2022	39,692	13,830	40	2,984	318	44	16
2023	39,742	14,989	45	No Season			
2024	24,834	11,135	51	No Season			

Table 2. Potential Wild Turkey Nest Predator Detections by Cover Type - Based on total photos from 167 cameras spread among study sites.

Predator Species	Cropland	Grassland	Shrubland	Forest/Woodland
Raccoon	242	117	174	790
Coyote	185	90	81	62
Bobcat	20	3	13	18
Opossum	0	3	23	52
Skunk	18	19	9	0
Armadillo	3	21	26	28
Badger	6	0	3	8
Total	474	253	329	958

Table 3. Draw statistics for 2024 spring turkey permit applications

Unit	Resident			Non-Resident				
	Authorized Permits	Applications	Total Draw	Authorized Permits	1 st Choice Application	2nd choice Application	Total Draw	Leftover Permits
Unit 1		NA		700	740	427	700	0
Unit 2		NA		2,400	2,017	1,888	2,320	80
Unit 3		NA		2,800	4,627	1,174	2,801	0
Unit 4	375	542	375	Resident only				
Unit 5		NA		900	1,106	1,191	900	0
Unit 6		NA		2,900	3,348	1,741	2,900	0

Table 4. Unit specific resident harvest success rates since 2014

Spring turkey season resident hunter success (%)

Year	Northwest (Unit 1)	Northcentral (Unit 2)	Northeast (Unit 3)	Southwest (Unit 4)	Southcentral (Unit 5)	Southeast (Unit 6)	Statewide
2014	48.2	55.1	50.5	54.5	52.4	42.7	49.3
2015	60.0	50.9	52.9	56.0	50.5	43.7	46.9
2016	34.5	54.1	48.7	40.7	44.6	41.2	43.0
2017	50.0	58.3	45.1	65.0	48.9	44.3	44.4
2018	37.8	41.8	37.3	37.5	44.3	35.5	36.9
2019	56.3	56.0	40.7	57.1	47.1	42.9	42.9
2020	61.1	58.2	45.7	69.6	44.8	37.7	45.6
2021	43.8	43.4	41.3	52.4	40.5	35.6	39.1
2022	25.0	39.2	39.9	50.0	39.1	34.2	35.9
2023	44.4	41.8	47.3	31.6	36.8	42.6	40.9
2024	45.4	47.6	39.8	50.0	49.3	40.5	42.7

MONTANA WILD TURKEY POPULATION STATUS REPORT – 2025

Western States Wild Turkey Technical Committee Meeting – April 7th – 9th, 2025 South Padre Island, TX

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POPULATION STATUS

Merriam's wild turkey populations have been reported at about 120,000 in Montana. The estimate is not based on any statistical model and is primarily based on professional opinion. Looking at harvest data and best comparable states harvest rates (e.g., fall harvest may take about 3% of adult females in some states) yields substantially lower estimated numbers, but many differences exist among seasons and habitats. These estimation procedures are probably flawed and biased. Examining depredation complaints, anecdotal observations, and harvest data indicates that Merriam's turkeys are increasing over the past 2 years and seem to be doing well in Montana. No other subspecies of turkeys occur in Montana, although there are rumored to have been illegal Eastern wild turkey releases at one time in northwest Montana.

REPRODUCTION

No formal surveys of broods or turkeys are conducted in Montana. Anecdotal observations and hunter reports indicate good brood survival over the past 2 years.

HARVEST

2024 Spring Turkey Season

The bag limit for 2025 is 14 turkeys. In 2024, when the bag limit was 11, 45,717 turkey licenses were issued (valid for a variety of seasons [regions; fall and spring; male or beardless] 41,278 resident licenses and 4,439 nonresident licenses). In spring 2024, 6,555 turkeys were harvested (4,391 by resident hunters, 2,164 by nonresident hunters). In spring 2024, 9,609 (7,126 resident and 2,484 nonresident) hunters hunted for 46,450 (40,380 resident and 6,070 nonresident) days.

2024 Fall Turkey Season

In fall 2024, 2,961 turkeys were harvested (2,653 by residents and 308 by nonresidents). Of that harvest, 1,587 were males (1,377 by residents and 210 by nonresidents) and 1,374 were females (1,276 by residents and 98 by nonresidents). In fall 2024, 5,409 (4,876 resident and 534 nonresident) hunters hunted for 26,442 (23,974 resident and 2,468 nonresident) days.

REGULATION-LEGISLATION CHANGES

Three fall beardless licenses were added in the northeastern portion of the state to address turkey issues in agricultural and exurban settings. Beginning in 2026, nonresident hunters of many upland game bird species may not be able to start hunting until 10 days following the start of the resident game bird seasons. This is a legislative adjustment to seasons and has not yet fully passed through both legislative houses and has not yet been signed into law.

Two new hunts for fall 2025 may be considered by the Fish and Wildlife Commission in June 2025. These fall hunts are a result of depredation complaints in Region 4 near Lewiston and throughout Region 5.

RESEARCH

A manuscript on managing conflict with wild turkeys was submitted to the National Wild Turkey Symposium on November 1, 2024. No reviews on the manuscript have been received to date.

EMERGING OR EVOLVING ISSUES

With increased population sizes, conflicts among people, primarily in urban settings, are beginning to increase. The agency is trying to locate the best deterrents for use in these situations.

NEVADA WILD TURKEY POPULATION STATUS REPORT - 2025

Western States Wild Turkey Technical Committee Meeting – April 7th – 9th, 2025
South Padre Island, TX

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POPULATION STATUS

Success rates of 75 percent were reported for hunt units 151, 152, 154 and Mason Valley WMA and 100 percent for hunt units 91 in Lander County and 202 in Lyon County. Higher success rates (> 50 percent) were reported for Lander County above, Elko County hunt unit 91(100 percent), White Pine County (60 percent), Paradise Valley of Humboldt County (64 percent). Conversely, poor success rates were reported for Elko County hunt units 101, 102, and 065 (25 and 30 percent) percent Lincoln County (46 percent), Moapa Valley of Clark County (50 percent) and Pershing County (50 percent). If hunts units with lower success continue through the spring 2025 harvest, then additional management action may be required with respect to the number of tags and seasons available.

HARVEST

Season Structure

Fourteen areas were available for resident hunters to choose from for the spring 2024 season, while non-resident hunters were confined to three of those areas or hunt unit groups. A total of 145 tags (all combine hunt types) were made available for these hunts during the spring 2024 season. In addition, both residents and non-residents could apply for a special private land's turkey hunt in Paradise Valley of Humboldt County. A reported number of 45 tags were provided for the two private lands hunts. Youth hunters could apply for seven different areas with 18 tags set assigned to this hunt.

Most hunt seasons began on March 30th and concluded on May 5, 2024.

Harvest and Effort

Of the 144 tags that were issued during the spring 2024 season, 128 (89 percent) returned their mandatory questionnaire. Thirteen of those hunters reported that they did not hunt and of the 131

that did, 67 reported that they were successful in harvesting either a tom or a jake turkey. The 58 percent success rate represented an increase over the previous spring's success rate of 46 percent and was a 15.1 percent below the long-term mean of 50.4 percent success (Figure 13).

Hunters reported spending a total of 346 days hunting with an average of 3.0 days spent in the field per person. Additionally, each hunter spent 1.5 days scouting. Of the 67 birds harvested, 52 (78 percent) were reported as toms while 12 (18 percent) were reported as jakes.

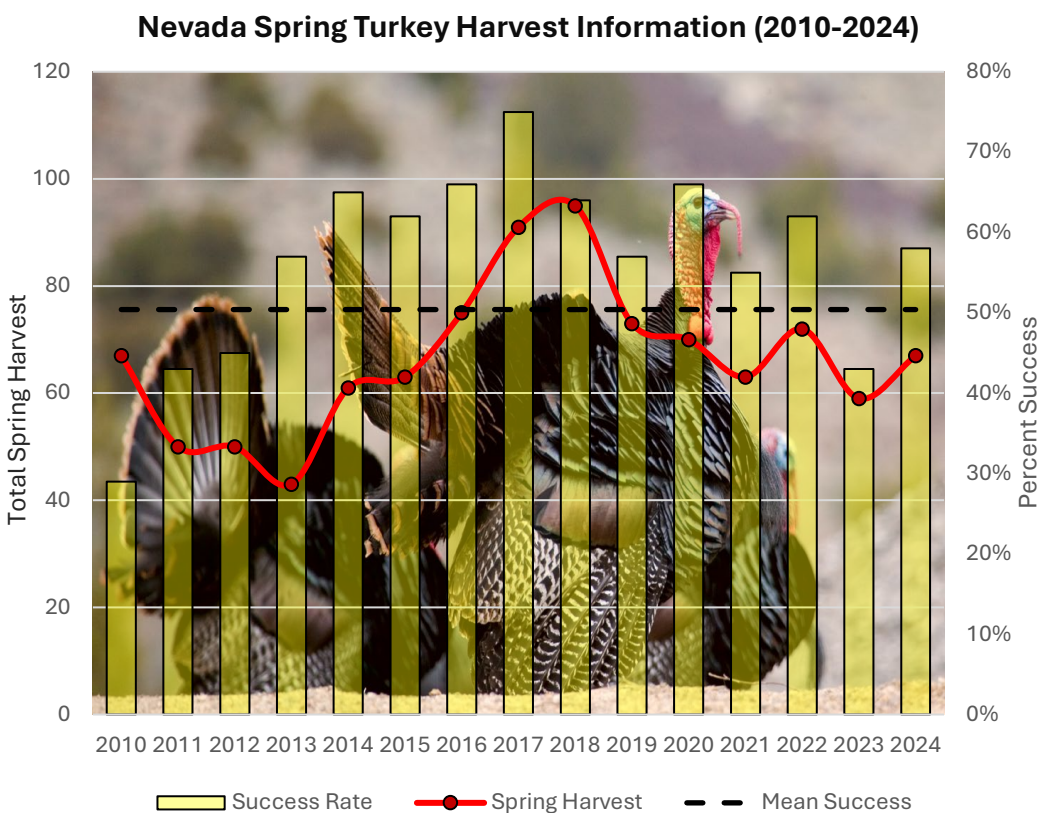


Figure 13. Nevada turkey harvest results from 2010 to 2024.

Sixty-four hunters reported that they used a shotgun to take their birds while 4 indicated that they used archery equipment. Average beard length was estimated at 7.6 inches, which is comparable to the average of 7.5 inches in 2023, but above the average of 7.0 inches reported during the 2020 season. Success rates and beard length are indicative of adequate numbers of older age class birds being available for most turkey populations throughout the state.

A total of 2,715 people applied for the limited entry spring turkey hunt in 2024. For the 100 limited entry tags available, this equated to an applicant success rate of 5.3 percent. This value is considered very low, even by most trophy big game species standards. A relatively high number of bonus points is required to have a reasonable chance at drawing one of these coveted tags.

NEW MEXICO WILD TURKEY POPULATION STATUS REPORT - 2025

Western States Wild Turkey Technical Committee Meeting – April 7th – 9th, 2025 South Padre Island, TX

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POPULATION STATUS

New Mexico is home to three subspecies of wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*): Merriam's (*M. g. merriami*), Rio Grande (*M. g. intermedia*), and Gould's (*M. g. mexicana*; Figure 1). Merriam's turkeys are typically associated with ponderosa pine and occupy most of the mountain ranges in the state. Rio Grande turkeys are found in many of the lower elevation riparian areas in the northeast, central, and southeast portions of the state. Gould's turkeys are confined to riparian areas and woodland-savannas in the Peloncillo and Animas Mountains in southwest NM.

The current statewide wild turkey population is unknown. New Mexico has not established a method to monitor population size or trend for Merriam's or Rio Grande turkeys. Based on calculations from Eriksen et al. (2015), the current New Mexico statewide population is estimated to be 23,183 birds. Population trends seem to be stable the last few years, based on anecdotal observations from field staff and hunters. Breeding bird survey (BBS) data show positive trends for New Mexico's turkey populations (Figure 2), but BBS noted this data may have deficiencies in New Mexico, so caution should be taken when assessing population change with this data source.

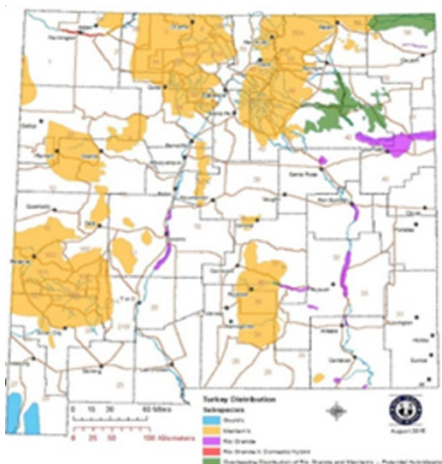


Figure 1. Wild turkey subspecies distribution in New Mexico

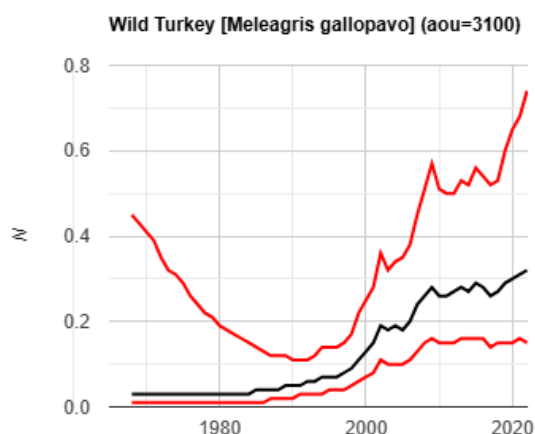


Figure 2. Breeding bird survey trends (1968– 2022) for wild turkey in New Mexico

The Department has been monitoring Gould’s turkey populations through spring surveys since 2006. Historically, survey sites were concentrated in areas of known roost sites or near water sources. Recent surveys have been targeted on GPS transmitter locations. Counts ranged from a low of 18 in 2006 to a high of 295 in 2024.

HARVEST

Current Regulations

Legal shooting time is ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset. Legal sporting arms include: any shot gun including muzzle loading shotguns using shot only, and bow and arrow. General turkey licenses are available over the counter, though there is a draw for hunts on special areas. The spring season runs from April 15–May 15, with a bag limit of 2 bearded turkeys. Fall seasons run from September 1–30 for archery, and November 1–30 for any legal sporting arm. The fall bag limit is 1 turkey.

Harvest Reporting

From 1961 to 2006 the Department collected turkey harvest information through mail surveys. No post-season turkey harvest survey 2006–2010. Beginning in 2011, turkey harvest reporting was conducted online. From 2011–2013, turkey harvest reporting was voluntary, and then turned mandatory in 2013–2014. Current reporting rates average approximately 80%.

Hunter and Harvest Estimates

The number of spring hunters and harvest have generally been on the rise. An estimated 9,777 individuals hunted in spring 2024, harvesting an estimated 3,037 birds.

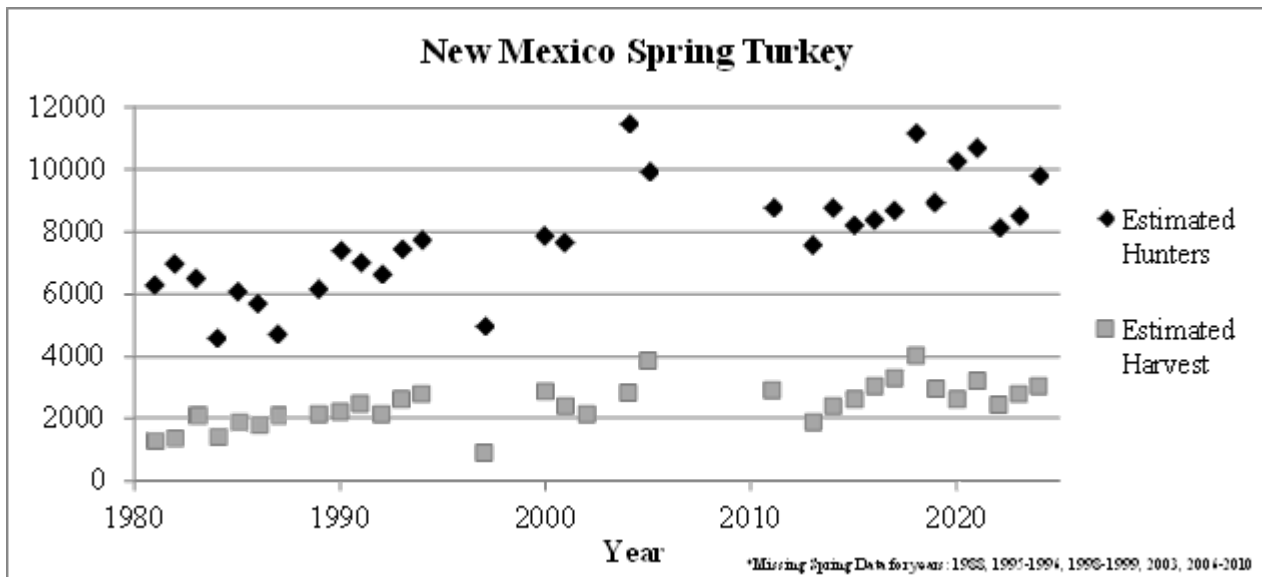


Figure 3. New Mexico wild turkey spring harvest

The number of fall turkey hunters dropped from 20,000 hunters to 3,000 hunters with end of the concurrent deer and turkey fall season. A turkey specific license was not required until 1983, so early estimates of fall turkey hunters were likely not accurate. The separated fall turkey license has allowed the Department to better approximate fall turkey hunters and harvest (Figure 4). Harvest estimates have varied from a high of 1,393 (1983) to a low of 108 (1997). Fall hunting was lower in the 1990s and early 2000s, with a slight resurgence of fall hunters in the last 10 years. An estimated 2,946 individuals hunted in fall 2024, harvesting an estimated 473 birds.

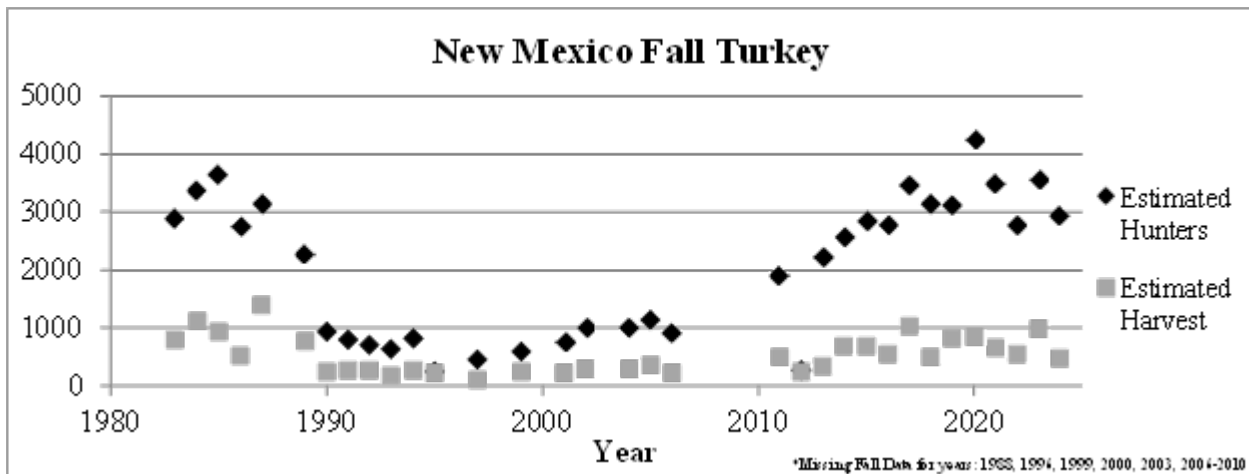


Figure 4. New Mexico wild turkey fall harvest

RESEARCH

Gould's Turkeys

From 2018 to the present, 65 hens and 52 males have been captured and fitted with GPS backpacks. Some transmitters collect three locations every other day, and all transmitters capture a nightly roost location. Information on reproduction, survival, and habitat use has been obtained from the transmitted birds. Some interesting observations include a male moving over 25 miles from capture location, and several hens going to Mexico and returning to New Mexico. The GPS data has also helped target survey areas for the annual spring survey, improving minimum population counts.

Merriams's Turkeys

The Department is currently investigating female Merriam's turkey survival, breeding season habitat use, and reproduction in New Mexico. During 2025, 41 were captured and fitted with GPS backpacks. There are currently 45 marked hens across the state. During 2024, 7 out of 16 hens nested, 3 of which were successful.

EMERGING OR EVOLVING ISSUES

Disease

Since 2020, Avian Pox has been documented in several locations in New Mexico. In the last several years, turkeys with lesions have been reported near Las Vegas, NM and Bosque del Apache NWR near San Antonio, NM.

During Merriam's turkey captures in March-April 2024, oropharyngeal swaps were taken to test for HPAI and Mycoplasmas. HPAI was not detected in any samples. At one ranch in the Northeast region, *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* (Mg) and *Mycoplasma synoviae* (Ms) were detected in trapped birds.

Nuisance/Damage Complaints

The Department has received several nuisance and damage complaints regarding wild turkeys in the last year. Primary complaints involve turkeys congregating on agricultural lands or in urban areas. As these lands are under private ownership, hunting pressure is much lighter, leading turkeys to linger in these areas. Several options the state is pursuing to alleviate these issues is encouraging landowners to sign up for Open Gate, the New Mexico private land access hunting program, and translocating turkeys to augment populations in non-problem areas.

MISCELLANEOUS

Trapping and Translocation Efforts

The Department's long-range management plan includes trapping wild turkeys from areas with large, healthy populations and relocating them to areas with smaller populations or areas where turkeys were previous extirpated. Turkeys have been moved within the state since 1939. A summary of translocations since 2000 can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. New Mexico wild turkey translocations from 2000–present.

Year	Month	Capture Location	Release Location	Male Adult	Juv	Female Adult	Juv	Total Birds	Subspecies
2000	Mar	Vermejo Park	Pelona Mt.		17	5	6	28	Merriam's
2002	Mar	Texas	Near Roswell					102	Rio Grande
2004	Feb	Chama	Luera Mts.					20	Merriam's
2004	Feb	Chama	Datil					19	Merriam's
2004	Feb	Chama	Sandia Mts.					22	Merriam's
05/06	Winter	Sacramento Mts.	Monticello Canyon, Horse Mt., and NE of Farmington					45	Merriam's
06/07	Winter	Sacramento Mts.	Guadalupe Mts.					18	Merriam's
06/07	Winter	Chama	Magdalena Mts.					17	Merriam's
07/08	Winter	Mayhill	Guadalupe Mts.					10	Merriam's
2008	Summer	Huey WMA	Delaware River	33	5	9		47	Rio Grande
08/09	Winter	Mayhill	Guadalupe Mts.					15	Merriam's
2014	Feb	Cimarron	Guadalupe Mts.					47	Merriam's
2014	Feb	AZ	Peloncillos Mts.	11	1	6	2	20	Gould's
2015	Feb	AZ	Peloncillos Mts.		9	6	3	25	Gould's
2016	Feb	AZ	Peloncillos Mts.		5		10	15	Gould's
2017	Feb	Raton	Guadalupe Mts.	4			1	5	Merriam's

2017	Feb	Raton	Guadalupe Mts.	4	12	16	18	52	Merriam's
2018	Feb	Santa Rosa	NE Roswell, NM	12	4	10	10	36	Rio Grande
2018	Mar	Raton	Guadalupe Mts.	15	16	17	24	72	Merriam's
2019	Feb	Raton	Cebolla Mesa		11	22	19	52	Merriam's

NORTH DAKOTA WILD TURKEY POPULATION STATUS REPORT – 2025

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POPULATION STATUS

The Department uses several population techniques to obtain trends on our wild turkey population. We have a landowner survey that is sent to most landowners who have turkeys wintering on their land. Our district biologists and game wardens annually record observations of wild turkey hens, broods and poults on standardized pheasant brood routes during July and August. We also have our field staff collect incidental turkey brood data from June 1 to September 1.

REPRODUCTION

The 2024 brood survey showed an increase in the total number of adult turkeys observed per 100 miles (7.7 vs. 4.7, 64%) and a decrease average brood size (5.13 vs. 7.46, -31%) from 2023.

The number of poults per adult hen was down 64% (.58 vs. 1.60) and number of broods was up 5% (39 vs. 37) from 2023.

HARVEST

2024 Spring Turkey Season

The state uses twenty-two hunting units during the spring season. These units include all of North Dakota's 53 counties. During the spring of 2023, the entire state was open for wild turkey hunting except for unit 21 in the southwestern part of the state. This area has been closed for the past 15 spring hunting seasons because of low turkey numbers in this unit.

Licenses are issued by weighted lottery after the number of gratis licenses is deducted from the total available. Only residents are eligible to apply for spring licenses, although three spring licenses are provided to the NWTF for auction. The 2024 Spring Wild Turkey Proclamation provided the Outdoor Adventure Foundation with three turkey licenses, valid in any open unit, for the 2024 spring season. In accordance with N.D.C.C. 20.1-04-07(1) (c)), these two licenses shall be issued to a qualifying youth who has cancer or a life-threatening illness.

First time spring turkey hunters age 15 or younger can receive one spring license valid for the regular hunting season for any open unit. As in the fall season, we provide only one time period for hunting wild turkeys in the spring. You choose your weapon from shotguns, muzzle loading. During the 2024 spring gobbler hunting season, a total of 8,589 regular season licenses were available.

Gratis and youth licenses were not included in the regular season license allocation. 6,847 hunters harvested 3,336 turkeys with a success rate of 49% in 2024.

2023 Fall Turkey Season

The state is divided into twenty-two hunting units and these areas include all 53 counties of North Dakota's. During the fall of 2021, twenty-one of 22 counties were open for wild turkey hunting. Unit 21 in the southwest was closed.

Licenses are issued by weighted lottery after gratis licenses are deducted from the total available. Only North Dakota residents are eligible to apply in the first lottery. If licenses remain after the first lottery, then nonresidents can apply.

North Dakota has no specific youth hunting season for wild turkeys in the fall. We also do not have a specific bow season for turkeys. We provide one time period for hunting wild turkeys in the fall, and you can choose your weapon from shotguns, muzzle loading shotguns, handguns and bow/arrows. During the fall of 2023, there were 4,435 permits available and 4,509 were issued (292 gratis and 4,217 general permits). From the wild turkey questionnaire, it was determined that 3,163 license holders hunted during the fall. Hunters harvested 1,288 wild turkeys for a success of 41 percent.

RESEARCH

Turkey Project Updates as of 8/9/2024

General Updates:

- There are 121 active birds on the landscape
- No more active nestsRecovered 5 transmitters in Riverdale this week, located 1 in a tree we will have to be creative about retrieving
- We have 6 other suspected mortalities we are working on getting landowner permission for at Riverdale (these are included in the "active" birds until we can confirm)
 - We will work on retrieving these in the next two weeks as I will be out of the office/field most of next week

Transmitter Recoveries:

- Of the 211 transmitters deployed, we have had a total of 90 mortality events
 - Only 84 transmitters have been recovered as one transmitter was completely destroyed (due to being runover by heavy machinery □ Grassy Butte)
 - 32 of the 90 transmitters have been on males (35.5%)
 - 58 of the 90 transmitters have been on females (64.5%)
 - 35 of the 90 transmitters have been on adults (38.9%)
 - 55 of the 90 transmitters have been on juveniles (61.1%)
 - 12 study birds were harvested during the spring 2024 season

Movement and Reproduction:

- No more active nests after we confirmed our last nest hatch this week.
- CONFIRMED 9 nest successes, 4 failures
- Average clutch size is 8.75 eggs based on eggshell remains
- Gave Charlie 6 unhatched eggs to send to University of Tennessee as part of an ongoing study looking at WITU egg fertilization
 - All eggs came from 2 nests, 4 from Kindred and 2 from Riverdale

Number of Active Transmitters:

- Some of these are marked as potentially dead, but this breakdown includes all non-recovered transmitters as of 8/9/2024.

Release Site	Total Birds Released 2023		Total Birds Released 2024		Active Birds as of 8/9/2024	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Glencoe (Graff)	5	1	X	X	2	0
Grassy Butte (Kosteletzky)	4	1	X	X	1	0
Mandan (Geiger)	2	3	X	X	1	0
Williston (Kjorstad)	6	1	X	X	6	0
Minot (Larson)	X	X	3	1	3	1
Grafton (Anthony)	X	X	2	5	1	4
Kindred Control (Rauser)	X	X	5	0	3	0
Railroad Control (Behm)	X	X	4	0	4	0
Riverdale WMA	29	16	39	8	42	5
Lewis and Clark WMA	28	4	38	6	44	4
Total	74	26	91	20	107	14

OKLAHOMA WILD TURKEY POPULATION STATUS REPORT – 2025

Western States Wild Turkey Technical Committee Meeting – April 7th – 9th, 2025 South Padre Island, TX

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POPULATION STATUS

Winter surveys were changed a little to represent a standard protocol statewide. We put renewed emphasis on finding flocks and counting the number of birds within each flock. Due mostly to standardization of protocol, decreases in populations were seen in the central and northeast regions of the state. Both the central and northeast region saw the largest population change in the state with an estimated decrease of 57%. The northwest and southwest regions saw little change of 1.7%. The protocol used did not change in these regions and thus no adjustment to population estimates was made like we had in the central and northeast. The southeast region noted an increase of 25%. Much of this increase is contributed to the renewed emphasis on winter flock survey data and may not reflect a population increase of 25%. Moving forward we hope that our standards and protocols allows all the regions to capture trends in turkey populations better than the older methods used in some of the various regions.

Throughout the state of Oklahoma, online check-in showed the spring harvest in 2024 increased 11.5 percent. Declines in 2021 to 2022 harvest data was a result of rule changes that went into effect. For the 2022 spring season ODWC reduced the bag limit statewide from 3 birds to 1 bird. ODWC expected the bag limit change to reduce our harvest and we did, by 37%. The increase shown in the online check-in data for 2024 had the same regulations as the 2022 and 2023 seasons and thus the harvest can be compared, and the increase is a welcome sight. Harvest in 2023 was the first year since 2016 that we have had an increase in harvest. We followed up the 2023 season with another increase in harvest in 2024. The regulation changes set in 2021 seem to be having a positive influence on our turkey populations.

Overall population estimates for the Rio Grande Turkey throughout the state indicate a stable to slightly increasing population. The Eastern Turkey population is stable, but they remain at low numbers. Weather has been a noted issue across this state Oklahoma. From severe drought and devastating wildfires to flooding, tornadoes and large hail events. In 2022 & 2023 a department wide emphasis was put in place on turkey surveys for better and more accurate data. Brood surveys

were assigned department wide and winter flock survey protocols were made an emphasis. This resulted in some major county level fluctuations, but that was anticipated. The statewide genetic sampling of harvested birds is ongoing and research projects in the southeast and southwest portions of the state to document vital rates are also ongoing.

REPRODUCTION

Eastern Wild Turkey

Winter Flock Survey

Figure 1 summarizes the winter flock survey data for the Southeast Region from 1978 through 2024 based on incidental sightings. The 2024 survey showed a 25.3% increase from 2023 with the 5-year mean decreasing by 3.25%. Some variation in data between years can be explained by difficulties inherent to the survey technique. Personnel and cooperator changes cause bias in data collection. Incidental sighting data are not precise but indicate population status and distribution. The increase in 2021 (+52.26%) is a result of 2020 being low on winter flock survey totals. This was due to very low participation as COVID-19 was affecting work and observations. Note: renewed emphasis on winter flock data may be responsible for some percentage increase. However, biologist opinion is that the Eastern population has seen a bump in population, at least in pockets.

Summer Brood Survey

The average number of poults per hen (2.73) percent of hens observed with poults (46%) and the total number of broods sighted (44) observed in the summer of 2023 indicated an average reproduction in the Southeast region (figure 9). The last documented year of 3 poults per hen or better was in 2013.

History

Long-term data from the winter flock surveys show that Eastern turkey populations were very healthy in the early 2000's up until 2009. The drought year of 2010 is often blamed for the start of the turkey decline that in some ways continues to exist. The past 5 years has shown a stabilization within the population but at a very low level. Current winter flock survey numbers are low only around one thousand birds being sighted during the sample period. It is important to note that survey effort will and or could bias the survey data. Oklahoma as used staff, county workers, mail carriers, and partners in the past but more recently, ODWC staff and partners (ngo and government) provide much of the data.

Summer Brood data collection in the southeast region of Oklahoma started in 1980. The standards have changed a little over time as we adopted the NWTF standard. The long-term data indicates that turkeys in the 1980s and 1990s were much more productive than they currently are. During the 1987

survey they documented a 6.4 poult per hen ratio which is the highest documented to date in Oklahoma. The lowest on record was in 2009 with only a .67 poult per hen ratio. More recently we are observing around 2 poults per hen which indicates a stable population. Dating back to the early 2000s we used to document around 200 sightings. Starting in 2021 to present we are documenting around 55 sightings annually.

Rio Grande Turkey

Winter Flock Survey

The 2024 range-wide Rio Grande Turkey minimum population estimate (41,717) showed a 37% decrease from 2023 (Figure 2). The highest population estimate recorded was in 2006 (118,891). Note that most of this decline was due to protocol changes in the central and northeastern regions. Both regions seen a decrease by 57%. Where we used to estimate a population, we are now counting birds that make up the winter flocks to provide the state with a “minimum” population estimate. This is to guard against over estimating populations. We can also monitor individually known flocks and provide a percentage of increase or decrease over time.

The western portion of the state did show a stabilization the past 3 years (2022 to 2024). The southwest region experienced a -4.14% decrease and the northwest region a -2.54% decrease for the 3-year average. The western portion of the state experienced catastrophic wildfires and drought during all of 2022. Those conditions continued into yearly 2023 with wildfires like the smoke house fire that started on February 26 and claimed 1,058,482 acres the Texas panhandle and western Oklahoma.

Summer Brood Survey

Emphasis was put on expanding the NWTF standard protocol for summer brood surveillance statewide starting in the summer of 2022. Currently all 5 management regions conduct the survey. Figure 10 shows long-term trends. Poult production within the Rio Grande range indicates average reproductive. The NW and SW regions did indicate slightly better than average during the 2022 season with 3.5 poults/hen.

History

The Rio Grande turkey population estimate for 2006 (118,891) was recorded during the peak years for the sub-species. Population estimates had increased in most years prior to 2006, but then followed with nearly annual decreases until 2014. For several years prior to 2007, spring and early summer weather conditions were nearly ideal for nesting and brood rearing. In those years population increases were noted in all parts of the bird’s range. The seven successive population decreases noted in 2007 through 2013 were atypical of previous trends. During the five-year period starting in 2007, central and northeastern wild turkey populations decreased each year. Western

populations increased in 2008 but then decreased each year prior to 2014. Dry conditions in 2010 and severe to exceptional drought in most of the state in 2011-2012, resulted in lowered recruitment in those years. With continued depressed populations in the west through 2018, compared to recent increases in central and northeast Oklahoma, it was apparent that the severe drought may have affected wild turkey habitat to an extent that populations soon may not recover above those observed pre-drought. Field observers report extensive mortality to cottonwood stands and other roost habitat in some areas.

Decreases in Rio Grande turkey population numbers prior to 2014 should have been anticipated. During restoration, turkeys expanded their range into unoccupied areas and population numbers increased as expected. Rio Grande turkey numbers increased substantially throughout all parts of the bird's range. The recent lower population estimates should be characterized as a normal function of population biology. The exceptionally high population levels observed in 2006 were not sustainable given the dynamic nature of weather and habitat conditions during reproductive season.

HARVEST

2024 Spring Turkey Season

Statewide spring harvest data for all regions is presented in Figure 3.

Regional spring harvest data is presented in Figures 4 through 8.

Eastern Wild Turkey

The southeast region is the only region that we claim to have a population of the Eastern sub-species of wild turkey. Figure 4 illustrates the long-term trends for the region. During the 2024 spring season the region seen a decrease of -2.68% in harvest. The five-year average is an increase of .84%. In summary the harvest has been very stable dating back to 2012.

Results of the turkey Hunter Pressure Survey (Figure 11) revealed an decrease of -4.09% in hunter activity (hunter-days) for the Pushmataha, James Collins, and McGee Creek Wildlife Management Areas (Table 1). A total of 436 hunter-days were recorded for Pushmataha WMA, 503 for James Collins WMA, and 207 for McGee Creek WMA during the 33-day season. The ten-year average of all three management areas is 386 hunter-days. It is important to note the number of hunting days prior to 2022 season ranged from 16-22 in the Southeast Region depending on the calendar year. 2022 and beyond the number of days in the season is set at 33. Covid-19 created a big jump in hunter use on our wildlife management areas. The decrease seen in 2021 is not less hunters on the average but a lot less than the previous year due to the Covid spike.

2024 hunting pressure in review; it seems that Pushmataha and James Collins the past two years (2023 & 2024) have seen a slight increase in wma use compared to the 2 years prior (2021 & 2022). McGee Creek has noted a strong decrease in hunting pressure when comparing the same years. McGee Creek used to be a destination location to hunt turkeys, however anecdotal and gobble

surveys seem to suggest the population has declined and struggling to rebound. James Collins has become a destination location not only for turkey but also deer and it is noted in this years survey with an increase of nearly 100 hunters. Hunter success indicates that James Collin's is the better of the 3 years to currently hunt. James Collins reported 1 in 18 hunters were successful while Pushmataha reported 1 per 29 and McGee Creek reporting 1 in 25.

History

In 1989, 1,836 birds were recorded at check stations in the southeast. The harvest declined to only 683 birds checked in 1994. The changes were attributed to population declines and more restrictive hunting seasons and bag limits. However, from 1994 through 2001, the harvest increased each year without modifications. In 2002, spring turkey season was moved back to April 6. The season length was 23 days (8 days less than the statewide season). The bag limit of one tom was raised to a limit of two for the combined 8 southeast counties. The spring of 2002 harvest resulted in an 84% increase over 2001 with 3,244 birds checked in southeastern counties. From 2004 – 2006, the season length for the spring turkey season was increased an additional seven days to the same as statewide 31-day season (April 6 through May 6). Bag Limit remained unchanged. In 2007 an additional two days were added to the season for the Youth Spring Turkey Season to promote recruitment of young turkey hunters under the age of 18. From 2007 through 2011 the population of Eastern turkey declined to point the regulations were changed in 2012. From 2012 – 2021, the spring turkey season for the southeast region opened on the third Monday of April and closed on May 6, with a 2-day youth season the weekend before the 3rd Monday start date. The bag limit was reduced to a one tom limit. The 2012 spring harvest resulted in a 53.9% decrease from 2011 figures (due to a later start date, shortened season length and reduced bag limit) with 688 birds checked in the southeastern counties. 2022 seen a big regulation change as the population of Rio Grande turkeys declined in the Western half of the state. The historic April 6th opening date for Rio Grande was needing to be changed. In doing so the agency moved to an opening date of April 16 statewide. This moved the SE opening date up a few days to have a single opening date that was statewide. Moving the SE opening date up was an attempt to prevent additional hunting pressure with 2 separate opening dates. The bag limit for Eastern birds changed from 1 tom for the 8 counties combined to 1 tom per hunter statewide (Figure 4).

For the 2022 spring turkey season to present, the harvest was basically unchanged compared to the other 4 regions. This is because the SE region basically had the season days, length, and bag limits in place. The 2022 season did lengthen from an average of 20 days to a fixed 33 days. The additional days were a few days on the front but mostly the 10 days on the end (May 6 ending date changed to May 16).

Rio Grande Turkey

Harvest Analysis

All 4 regions of the Rio Grande range (Southwest, Northwest, Central, and Northeast) reported increased harvest numbers for the second straight year.

Regional summaries showing Rio Grande populations year harvest totals can be found in Figures 5 through 8. The 2024 harvest exceeded the harvest of 2021 when we had an early season start date of April 6th and a 3-bird limit. This is an indication that we had more birds on the landscape and that hunter success rate was higher in 2024 than in 2021.

To illustrate the decline in Western Oklahoma, statewide in 2019 we had five counties (Beckham, Ellis, Major, Roger Mills, and Woodward) checked in over 200 birds. 2021 we had only 3 counties check in over 200 birds (Ellis, Roger Mills and Woodward). During the 2022 spring season one county (Roger Mills County) harvested over 200 birds.

To illustrate a slight rebound during the 2024 spring season we had 4 counties harvest over 200 birds. (Ellis, Major, Roger Mills, Woodward) Roger Mills County checked in 386 birds, the best since year 2019 when it checked in 406 birds. Major County checked in 244 birds, the best-known harvest post 2015.

Ellis County is a good example of our turkey decline and ODWC's approach for regulation changes for the 2022 spring season. In 2017 Ellis County harvested 302 birds. Then, due to population decline, harvest went to 212 birds by year 2021. For the 2022 season, due in large to the reduced bag limit Ellis County harvested 76 birds. So, the statewide big limit reduced to one bird might have saved as many as 136 birds in Ellis County alone. During the 2024 harvest season Ellis County harvest 206 birds, a nice rebound from the 2022 harvest numbers.

History

The turkey restoration project is one of the most successful wildlife projects in Oklahoma's history. Rio Grande populations quickly became established in western Oklahoma following early restoration efforts. Later, Rio Grande releases in central and some eastern counties also proved successful. In only 16 years, 1949 – 1965, ODWC went from the beginning of restoration to opening the state's first spring turkey hunting season.

Historically, there was no mandatory checking of harvested wild turkeys west of I35 (western half of the state). Statewide online turkey harvest data become mandatory in 2014. Because there was no check in process little to no historic data of harvest is known. We do know anecdotally, from stories and a liberal bag limit, that harvest was high and the turkey hunting was very good in the early 2000's.

2023 Fall Turkey Season

Rio Grande & Eastern Turkey Combined - Harvest Analysis

The fall harvest remains to be a low participated hunting season with most activity coming from incidental opportunities while deer hunting. 2023 Fall season had 256 birds reported statewide. Figure 12 will show you the region break down and season total. Central region has historically seen higher harvest than the other regions. Hen harvest in the fall as dramatically decreased after the 2021 regulation changes making it Tom only and removing the either sex regulation. Hen harvest in fall of 2023 was 7%.

HUNTING INCIDENTS

One hunting incidents occurred in Oklahoma during the 2024 season. A group of non-resident hunts was guided by a group of residents. The hunters set up on a corn feeder, illegal in Oklahoma within 100 yards of bait, and the residents went on the other side of the feeder about 50 yards away to watch. As the hunters took aim and shot at a bird the pellets traveled pass the target and hit one of the bystanders on the other side. The injuries were non-lethal but professional medical attention was needed.

RESEARCH

Turkey research in Oklahoma has not lost its momentum from its start in 2022. Currently researchers from Oklahoma State University are conducting field work and tissue samples are being collected statewide by ODWC staff. See appendix 2 for research details.

Research Update

In the southeast portion of the state (McCurtain and Pushmataha counties) winter trapping was continued for a third field season. This winter 31 hens are equipped with tracking devices of various types. 19 of the hens have been identified that have initiated incubation. Preliminary data suggest that nest success is very low. Researchers collected and shipped 29 eggs (clutches of 12, 9, and 8) to the university of Tennessee for viability testing. These eggs were obtained after the known hen was predated or abended. Researchers have also conducted 39 vegetation surveys for the year's failed nest locations (one survey taken at the nest and two random locations within the same stand). Game cameras are also going to be deployed for the predator density estimate of the project At the time of this report second and third nest attempts for 2024 breeding season is ongoing.

In the southwest portion of the study (Harmon and Greer Counties) we have entered into the second season for winter trapping. Transmitters were deployed on hens captured via walk in traps. Game cameras will also be deployed this spring for the predator density estimate of the project this spring. For the genetic portion of this study, tissue samples are currently being collected statewide for analysis. Preliminary data is indicating that genetic flow and hybridization is accruing along the Red River. Early results are also indicating that the northeast turkey population is very hybridized.

EMERGING OR EVOLVING ISSUES

SW counties Harmon, Jackson, Tillman, and Greer within the SW Region are showing the worst population decline among Oklahoma. Decline is being reported among Winter Flock Surveys, Hunter Harvest Reporting, and public comments of concern.

As populations decline, thoughts of how to manage harvest and hunter pressure on Wildlife Management Areas is being discussed and growing in concern.

Live feed or cellular trail cameras and thermal imaging devices are gaining notice as being used in the pursuit of turkeys.

Fanning and repping hunting strategies are a topic that has been discussed with the SEWTWG, currently no issue or discussion is being discussed within Oklahoma.

A “No-Jake” rule was reviewed by the turkey project leaders. We noted that in 2022, jake harvest made up 24.5% of the total harvest. Project leaders do not believe this is significant to warrant a No-Jake Rule.

Aflatoxins and baiting/feeding in the state are evolving to possible research for future regulation implications.

Public releasing turkeys to “help” with population declines. Need to strengthen regulations to make it illegal for release of pen raised turkeys.

Out of state hunting guides are noted as the source of a lot of harvest and regulation violations in the western portion of the state. As states around the country limit opportunities those hunters are looking for over the counter tags like Oklahoma and thus could put additional hunting pressure on the research from nonresident hunters.

RELEVANT LINKS

www.wildlfieldepartment.com

MISCELLANEOUS

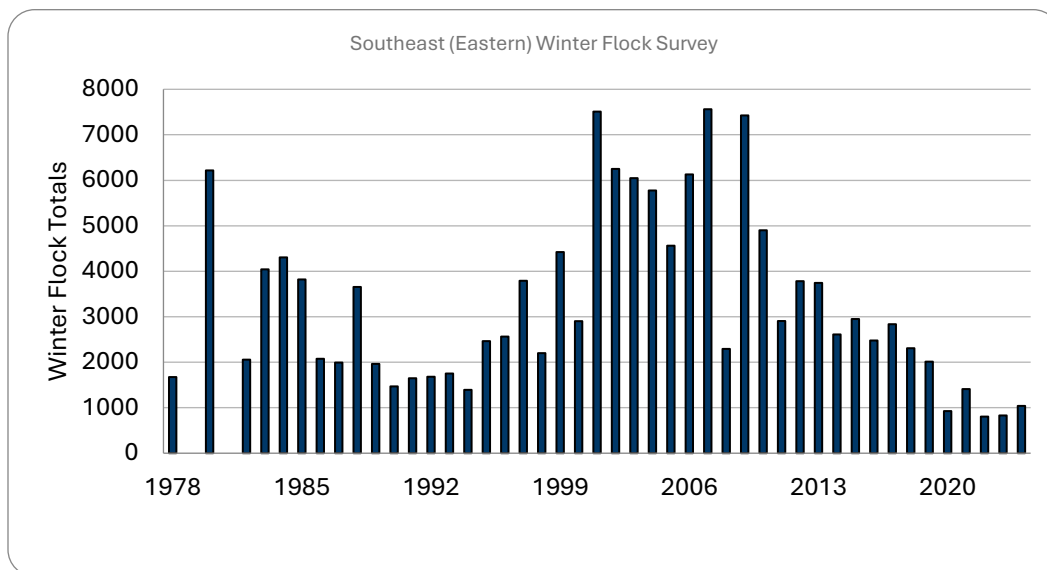


Figure 1. SE Winter Flock Survey 1975-2023

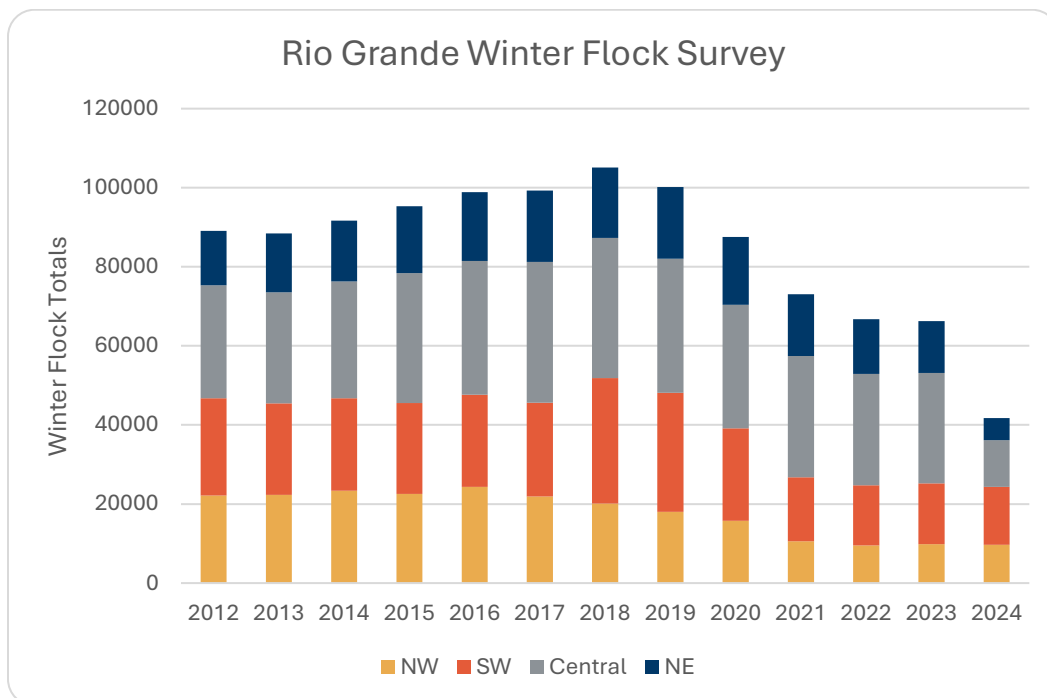


Figure 2. Rio Grande population estimates by region 2012-2023

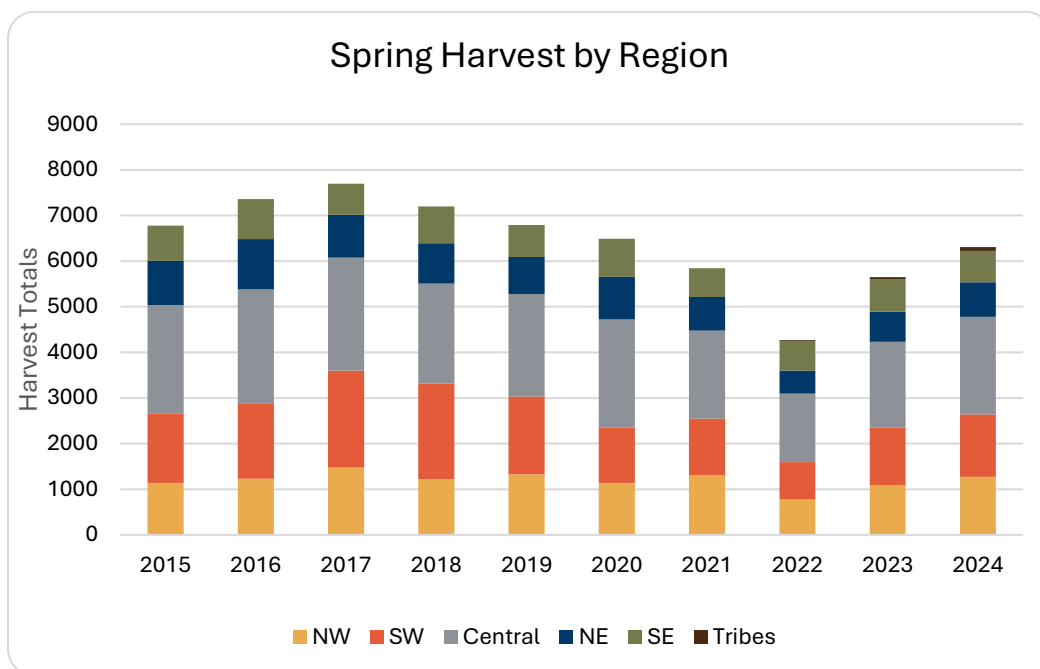


Figure 3. All regions plus tribal spring turkey harvest

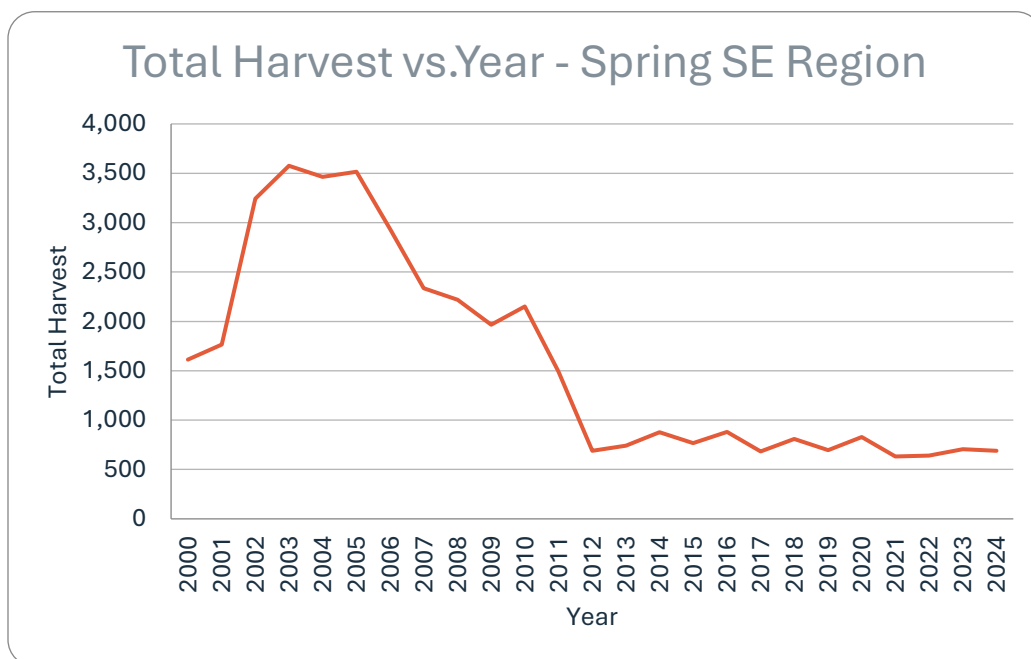


Figure 4. SE region spring turkey harvest

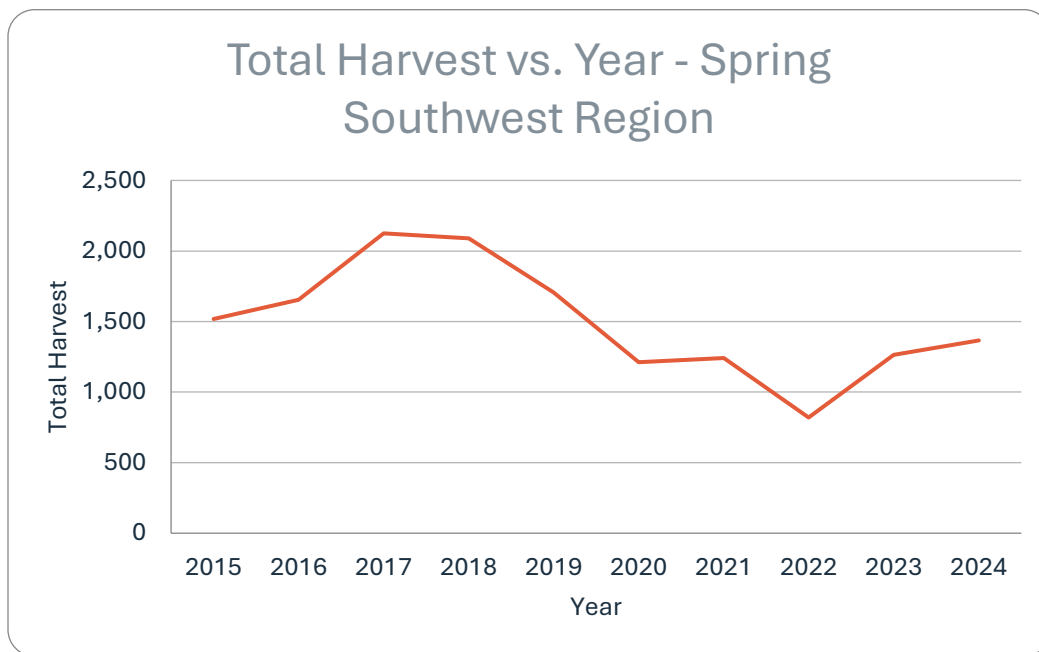


Figure 5. SW region spring turkey harvest

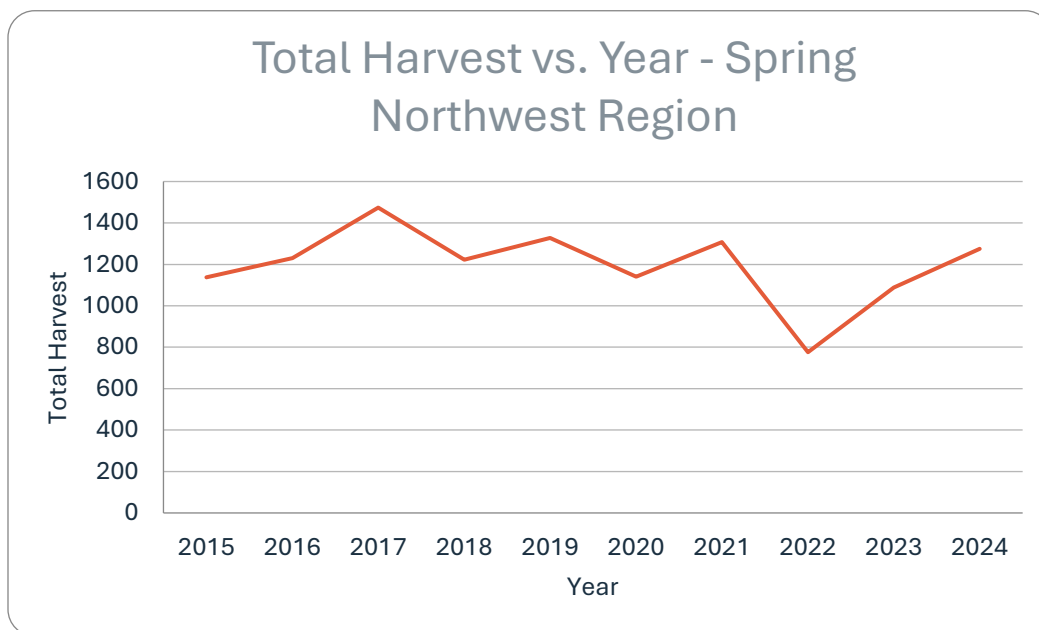


Figure 6. NW region spring turkey harvest

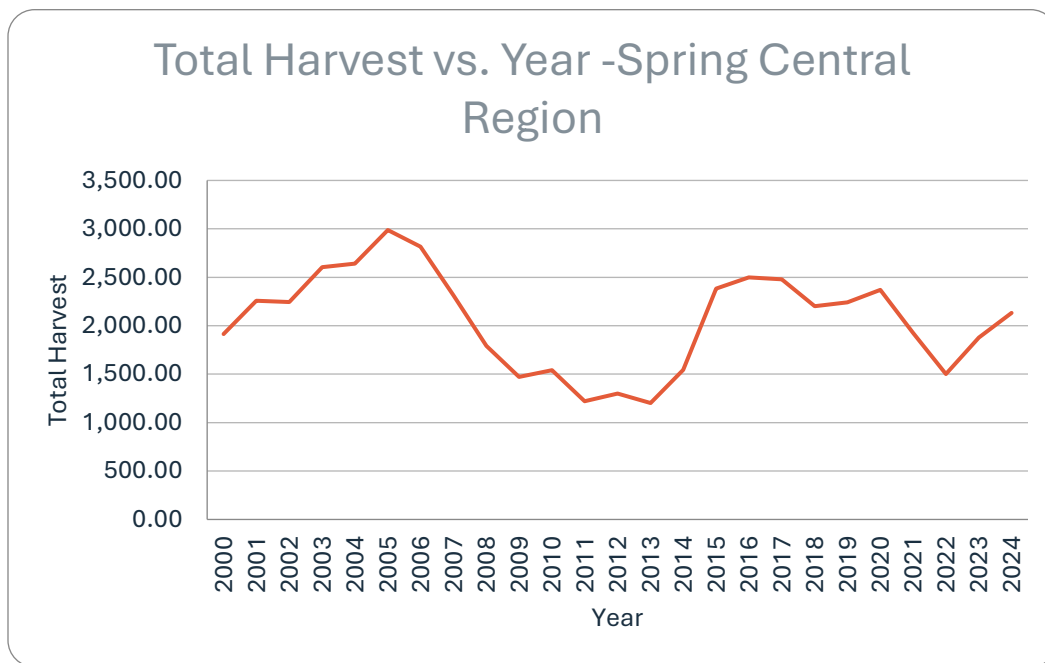


Figure 7. central region spring turkey harvest

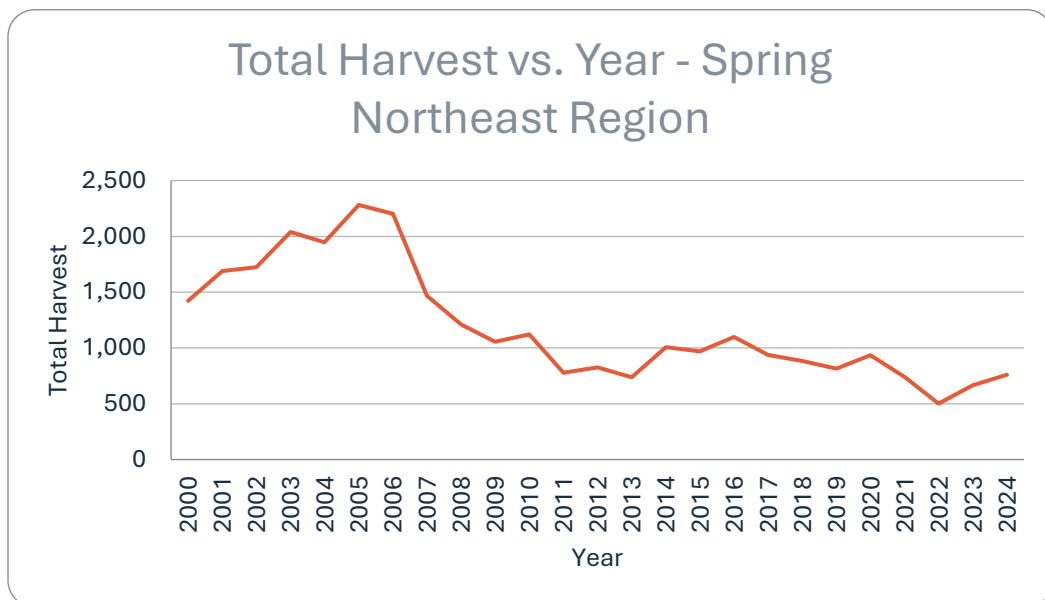


Figure 8. NE region spring turkey harvest

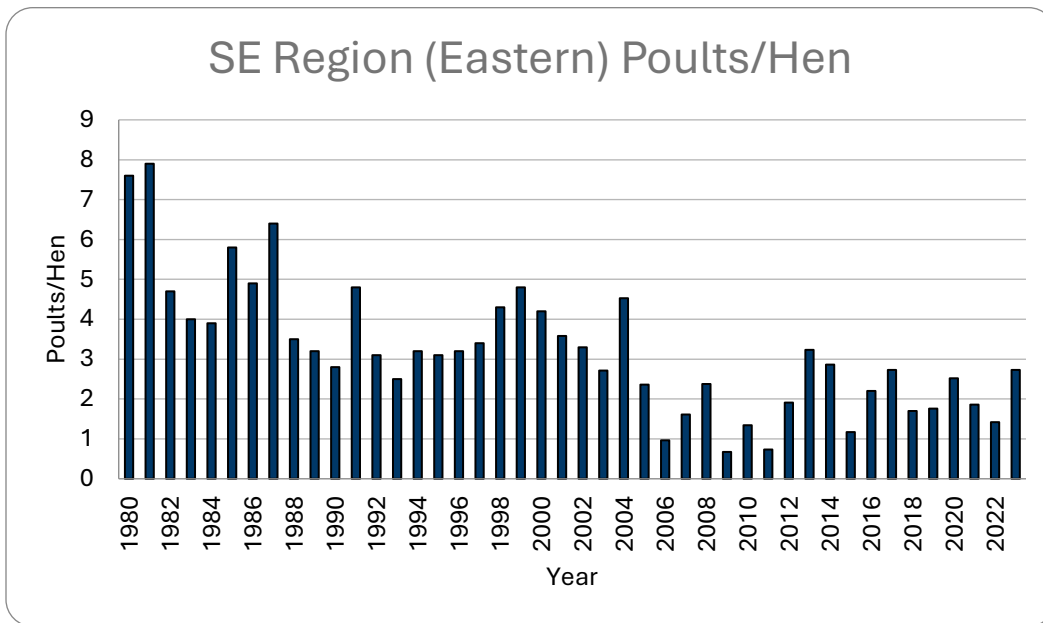


Figure 9. SE region summer brood poult/hen 1980-2023

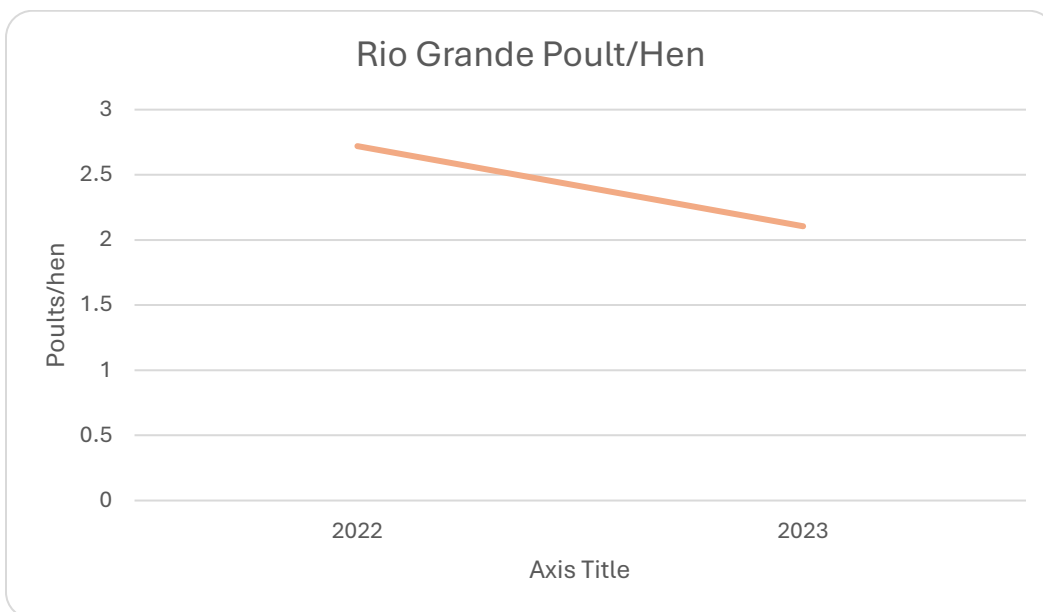


Figure 10. Rio Grande region summer brood poult/hen 2022-2023

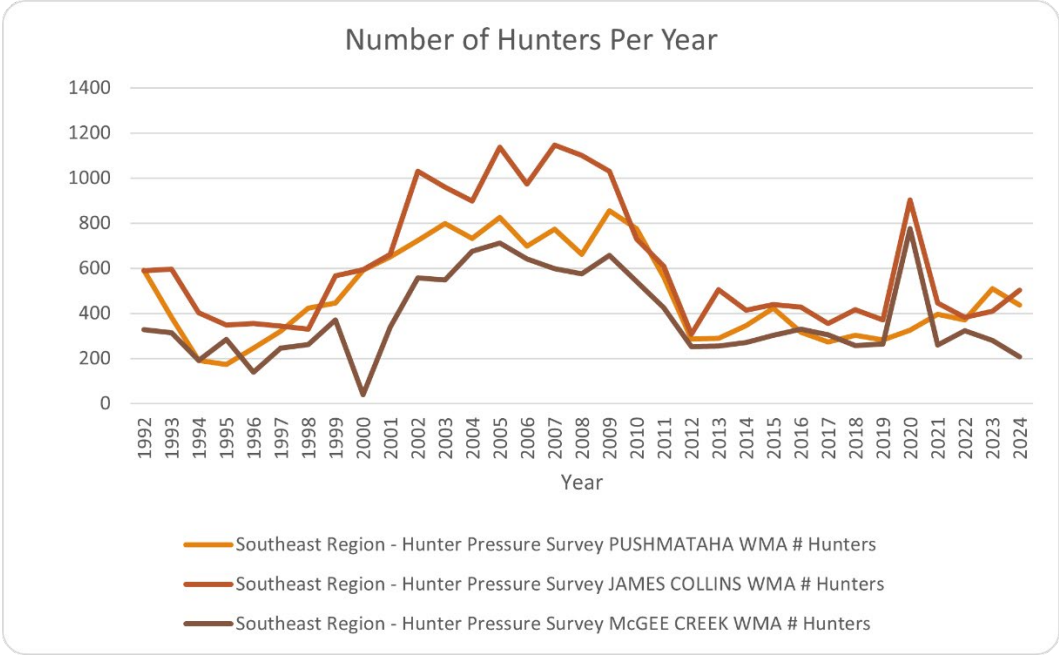


Figure 11. Hunter Pressure Survey

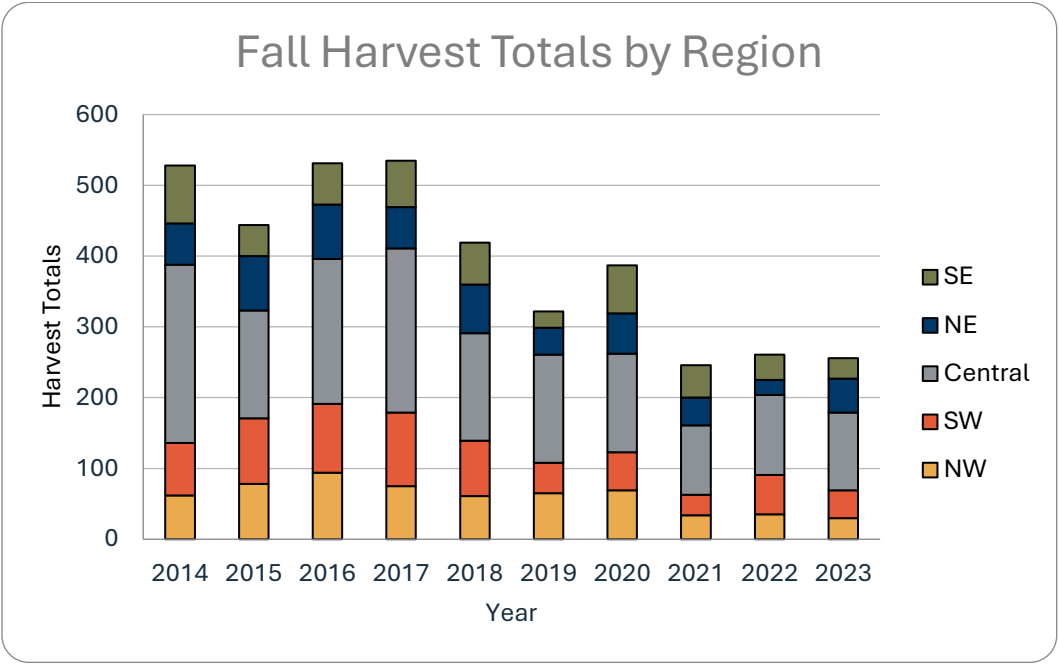


Figure 12. Fall Harvest Totals

Table 1. SE area hunter pressure

	PUSHMATAHA WMA		JAMES COLLINS WMA		McGEE CREEK WMA					
Year	# Vehicles	# Hunters	# Vehicles	# Hunters	# Vehicles	# Hunters	TOTAL HUNTERS	Average	% Change + or - from Previous	Season Length in Days
1992		591		588		327	1506			31
1993		382		595		313	1290		-14.34%	31
1994		191		403		191	785		-39.14%	16
1995		174		347		284	805		2.54%	16
1996		245		355		138	738		-8.32%	16
1997		321		344		245	910		23.30%	16
1998	234	423		329		262	1014		11.42%	16
1999	240	446		566		371	1383		36.39%	21
2000	329	592	336	594		40	1226		-11.35%	21
2001	350	650	356	662	217	340	1652	551	34.74%	21
2002	393	723	578	1030	319	557	2310	770	39.83%	23
2003	442	798	551	959	319	549	2306	769	-0.17%	23
2004	374	731	505	898	395	675	2304	768	-0.08%	31
2005	428	826	643	1136	572	712	2674	891	16.05%	31
2006	347	698	529	974	386	642	2314	771	-13.46%	31
2007	406	774	635	1145	365	599	2518	839	8.81%	33
2008	331	662	548	1100	345	575	2337	779	-7.18%	33
2009	443	855	557	1029	399	656	2540	847	8.68%	33
2010	407	775	419	730	302	542	2047	682	-19.40%	33
2011	294	562	364	610	268	425	1597	532	-21.98%	33
2012	159	286	183	308	164	252	846	282	-47.02%	16
2013	151	289	277	505	151	254	1048	349	23.87%	17
2014	197	345	244	415	156	271	1031	344	-1.62%	18
2015	232	422	232	439	207	302	1163	388	12.80%	19
2016	194	316	252	428	214	329	1073	358	-7.73%	21
2017	174	274	228	354	192	304	932	311	13.14%	22
2018	183	303	244	417	163	257	977	326	4.82%	16
2019	178	282	236	371	172	263	916	305	-6.24%	17
2020	203	325	564	903	485	776	2004	668	118.77%	18
2021	261	395	278	446	190	260	1101	367	-45.05%	18
2022	209	371	216	382	220	324	1077	359	-2.17%	33
2023	305	509	237	409	202	280	1198	399	11.14%	33
2024	247	436	315	503	158	207	1146	382	-4.09%	33

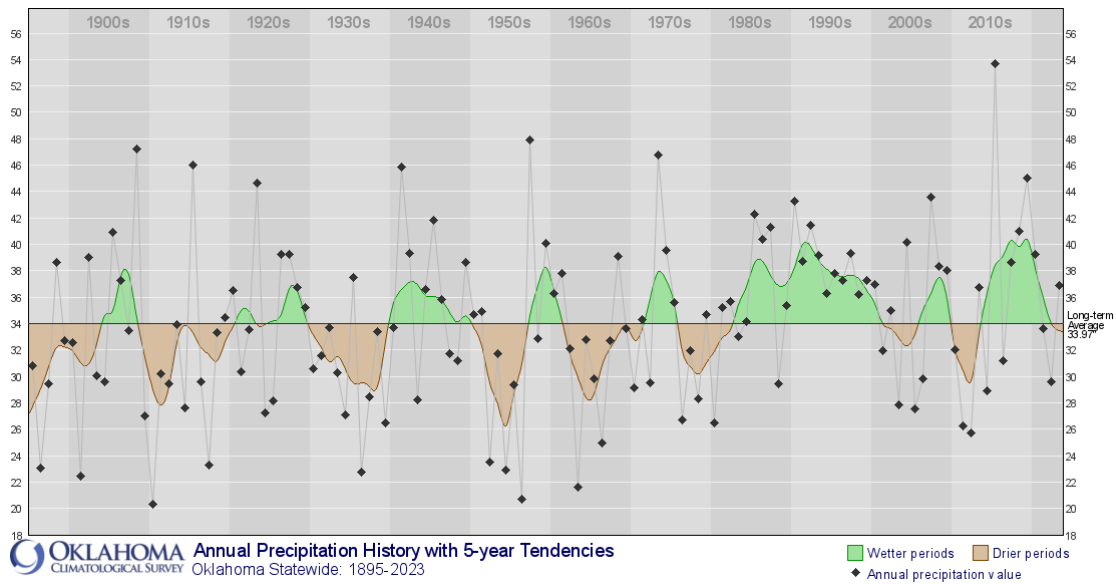
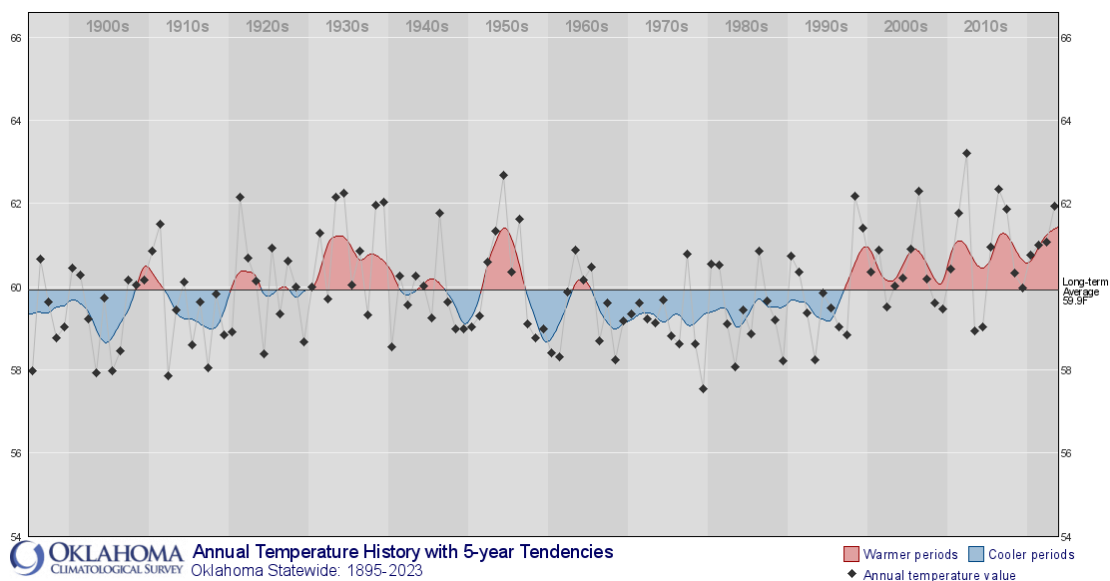


Image 1 Annual Precipitation History of Oklahoma – 1895-2023



Annual Temperature History of Oklahoma – 1895-2023

U.S. Drought Monitor Oklahoma

May 14, 2024

(Released Thursday, May. 16, 2024)

Valid 8 a.m. EDT

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	67.36	32.64	12.13	5.91	0.00	0.00
Last Week 05-07-2024	51.62	48.38	20.41	5.91	0.00	0.00
3 Months Ago 02-13-2024	83.39	16.61	3.23	0.19	0.00	0.00
Start of Calendar Year 01-02-2024	55.32	44.68	21.64	3.08	0.00	0.00
Start of Water Year 09-26-2023	34.29	65.71	46.76	30.93	12.91	0.00
One Year Ago 05-16-2023	44.21	55.79	50.19	43.81	30.67	8.88

Intensity:

None	D2 Severe Drought
D0 Abnormally Dry	D3 Extreme Drought
D1 Moderate Drought	D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

Author:

Lindsay Johnson
National Drought Mitigation Center



droughtmonitor.unl.edu

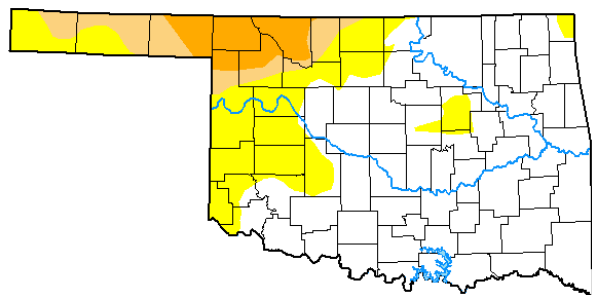
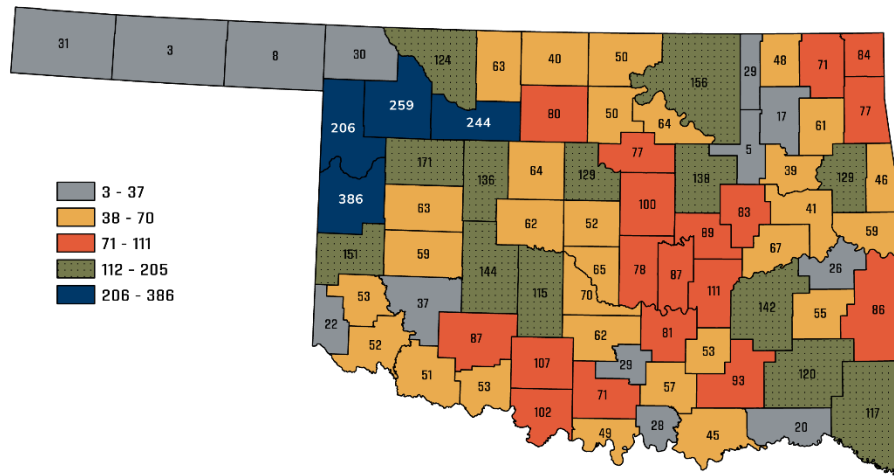


Image 1b Current Drought conditions of Oklahoma

TURKEY HARVEST BY COUNTY 2024



Production Date:
5/24/2024

Image 2 Turkey harvest count per county – Spring 2024

Appendix A – Signed turkey regulation changes for Oklahoma 2021



Turkey Resolution
6-21-21 - Signed.pdf

Appendix B – Turkey Research Objectives for Oklahoma



Turkey Research
Objectives.pdf

OREGON WILD TURKEY POPULATION STATUS REPORT – 2025

Western States Wild Turkey Technical Committee Meeting – April 7th – 9th, 2025
South Padre Island, TX

Mikal Cline - Upland Game Bird Coordinator
Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife
4034 Fairview Industrial Drive SE
Salem, OR 97302
503-383-6700 / Mikal.L.Cline@odfw.oregon.gov

POPULATION STATUS

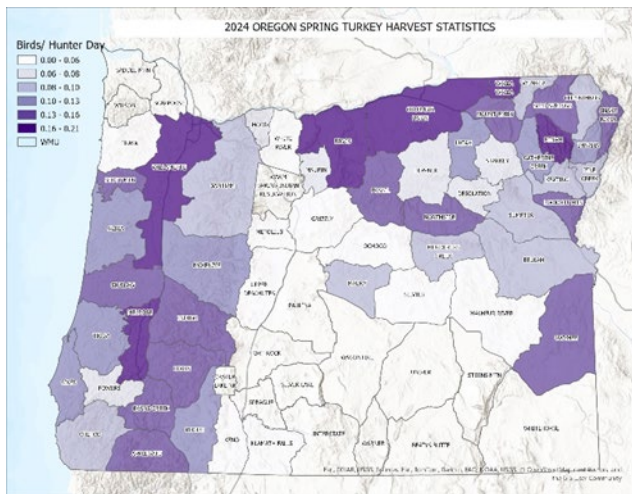
No significant change in Oregon's current wild turkey population estimate of 40,000 – 50,000 birds. All 36 Oregon counties have the potential of turkeys. 2025 Outlook: Production continues to be strong in most areas with little indication of environmental limitations. Winter chick/hen ratio from trapped flocks is 1.5:1. Nesting and early brood-rearing conditions are primarily responsible for reproductive success. The summer of 2024 was a record wildfire year in Oregon with 1.9M acres burned, with about 0.5M acres in woodland habitat types. The winter of 2024-25 was above-average in terms of precipitation, continuing into spring, effectively ending Oregon's 10-year drought cycle.

HARVEST

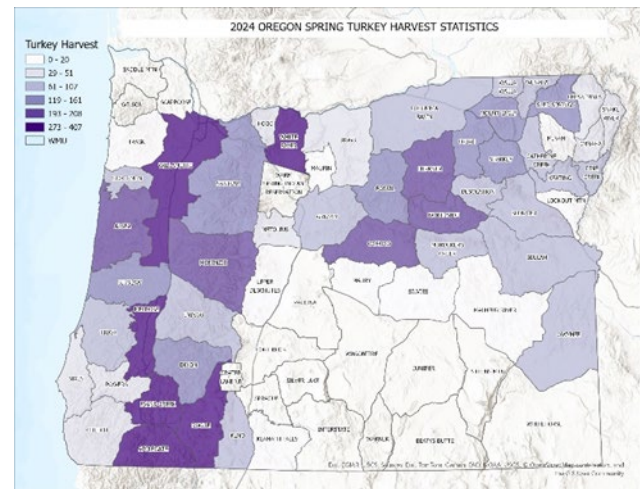
Hunting

2023 Spring Season

April 15- May 31. Season length unchanged since 1993 (except for addition of youth turkey hunt) Season Bag limit- 3 bearded birds statewide, but not more than one turkey per day. In 2024, 14,370 turkey tag holders went hunting and harvested 5,948 spring turkeys, up 6% from 2023. Spring tag sales have decreased since allowing choice of spring/fall tags with the SportsPac. Southwest Oregon remains the core area for wild turkey harvest, but 50.5% of the total harvest occurred east of Cascade Mountains, primarily in the Blue Mountains.



A. 2024 Wild Turkeys Harvested per Hunter Day



B. 2024 Total Harvest per Wildlife Management Unit

2024 Spring Youth Hunt

Oregon held its 18th youth turkey hunt April 13-14, 2024. The hunt takes place the first full weekend prior to general spring season opener on April 15. The season is open statewide for youth age 17 and under. Oregon offers a reduced-price youth turkey tag valid for resident and nonresident youth during youth turkey hunt and/or general season. Youth harvested 318 turkeys during the 2-day youth season and an addition 518 turkeys during the remainder of the spring season. Youth accounted for about 12% of total spring harvest of turkeys in Oregon in 2024.

2023-24 Fall Season

Oregon simplified fall season regulations in 2020 by eliminating the last controlled hunts, removing limits on total tags available, resulting in 2 general season fall hunts: Eastern and Western. Hunters are allowed to harvest up to 2 fall turkeys, of which only one can be from eastern Oregon. The length of the hunting season was extended to January 31st in 2020 to allow hunters more opportunity to address chronic nuisance and damage issues.

In 2021, the Grant County emphasis area was established including the Murderer's Creek, Desolation, and Northside WMU, and southern portion of the Heppner WMU. The eastern Oregon fall general season opened on September 1 in this area in 2021. Another change in 2021 allowed western Oregon hunters to harvest both fall turkeys on the same day. Only one fall turkey may be taken in eastern Oregon under current regulations. In 2022, western Oregon regulations changed to initiate fall turkey hunting on September 1. The Oregon Fish and Wildlife commission is considering expanding the fall turkey open area to include 4 additional WMUs, and eliminating separate western and eastern Oregon fall turkey tags.

In 2023, 11,363 fall turkey tags were sold, up 97% from the previous year. This change was related to the change in SportsPac turkey tag selection options, with more hunters selecting fall tags. Hunter participation increased 30% and hunting effort was up 27%. Total fall turkeys harvested was

estimated at 1,546 birds, up 28% from the previous year. Harvest was fairly evenly divided between east and west with 52% of harvest coming from western Oregon. 2024 fall harvest data will be available after April 15, 2025.

Beardless Turkey Permit

In an effort to utilize turkey hunters to deal with private land turkey nuisance and damage, the Beardless Turkey Permit was introduced in 2023-24. This product allows the harvest of 3 beardless or hen turkeys per permit, for the same cost as a turkey tag, on private land within select areas. A total of 204 turkeys were harvested in the initial year on this product by 113 hunters, including 182 hens and 22 toms. The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission approved the expansion of the product to select units in the Willamette Valley in 2024-25 and are considering additional units in southwest Oregon for 2025-26.

Tag & License Fees

Since 2010 youth turkey tags for residents and non-residents cost \$10.50. In 2018, an adult resident turkey tag cost \$25.50 and adult non-resident turkey tags cost \$87.50, up \$1.00 and \$3.50, respectively, from the previous year. Turkey hunters also must have a general hunting license. Annual hunting licenses for adults are \$33.50 for residents and \$167.00 for non-residents, up \$1.50 and \$7.50, respectively, from the previous year. Non-residents have the option of purchasing 3-day license(s) at \$31.50 for each 3-days (up \$1.00 from 2017). Beginning in December 2021, the Department began offering the option for SportsPac purchasers to select either a fall or spring turkey tag.

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MISCELLANEOUS

Turkey Management

Nuisance and Damage

As in past years, addressing turkey nuisance and damage continues to be the primary management concern among our wildlife districts. The issue is acute on the west side of the state in suburban areas where turkey flocks are increasing, and the growth of the human population expands into rural lands. The suburban/urban areas make it difficult to use the preferred management tool, hunting, to

control turkey numbers. Trapping and transplant is not a viable option in many of the circumstances because effective methods like the use of rocket nets are not available or due to staff capacity limitations. In almost every case, the problem is created by landowners providing supplemental feed for the turkeys, either knowingly or inadvertently. A number of cities have attempted to craft municipal ordinances that prohibit the feeding of turkeys without restricting residents from feeding other wildlife, such as songbirds.

ODFW tracks all wildlife complaints through an internal database. In 2024, turkeys were attributed to 190 of the 2,501 nuisance and damage complaints statewide. The majority of turkey complaints were categorized as “nuisance” (54%). Agricultural damage complaints accounted for 17% of the reports.

Trap/Transplant

The Upland Game Bird Program invested in additional seasonal capacity in eastern and western Oregon for the third year in row to assist with trapping, emergency hunts, and landowner complaints. ODFW trapped and relocated approximately 195 turkeys during statewide during the winter of 2024-25. All turkeys were trapped in response to nuisance and damage complaints. Captures occurred in Douglas and Wasco counties. Birds were relocated to pre-approved areas where the turkeys are less likely to become a nuisance and will offer public hunting opportunities.

Habitat

ODFW utilized game bird stamp and turkey tag funds to purchase 2 skid steers with mulching heads for habitat projects in southwestern Oregon. This machinery will have a direct benefit to wild turkey habitat.

SOUTH DAKOTA WILD TURKEY POPULATION STATUS REPORT – 2025

Western States Wild Turkey Technical Committee Meeting – April 7th – 9th, 2025 South Padre Island, TX

Chad Lehman – Senior Wildlife Biologist
South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks
Custer State Park, 13329 US HWY 16A
Custer, SD, 57730
605-255-4515 / Chad.Lehman@state.sd.us

POPULATION STATUS

Two primary subspecies (eastern and Merriam's turkeys) occur in the state. Eastern turkeys are most common east of the Missouri River in eastern riparian/cropland habitats. Merriam's turkeys primarily occur west of the Missouri River in prairie riparian and ponderosa pine habitats.

REPRODUCTION

We collected turkey brood data from July 1 to August 31, 2024. We record all hens observed with or without broods and the number of poults in each brood during their routine field assignments during the allotted time period. Using the NWTf Technical Committee Standardized Brood Survey Analysis for the Black Hills we counted 309 hens with 1260 poults for a poult:hen ratio of 5.07 (SE = 0.34). The poults:brood ratio was 5.38 (SE = 0.32).

HARVEST

In 2023, South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks sold a total of 22,018 turkey hunting licenses (Fig. 1). Wild turkey harvest appears to be increasing (Fig. 2, 3, 4). Figures 1 and 2 include both spring and fall for licenses sold and harvest. Figures 3 and 4 only include spring harvest data. It is important to note that Black Hills harvest has steadily increased from 1,563 males in 2022 to 2,156 males in 2024. In 2023, the Black Hills implemented a delayed season to align more closely with hen incubation and the season length is roughly 14 days shorter than previous seasons. This structure of aligning better with the start of peak hen incubation and the second gobbling peak may partially explain the increase in harvest success.

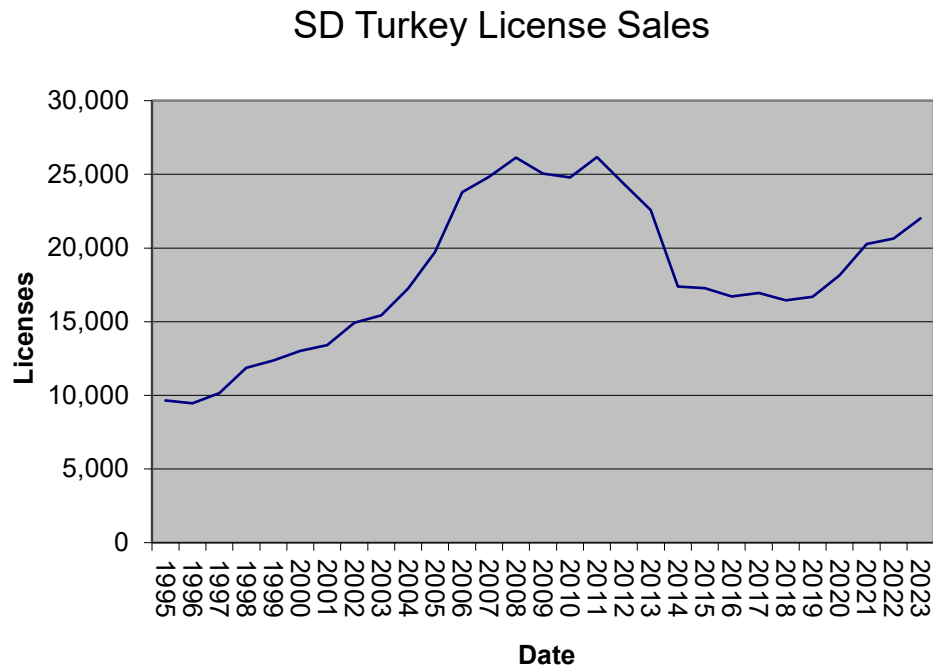


Fig. 1. Number of turkey licenses sold for the state of South Dakota from 1995-2023.

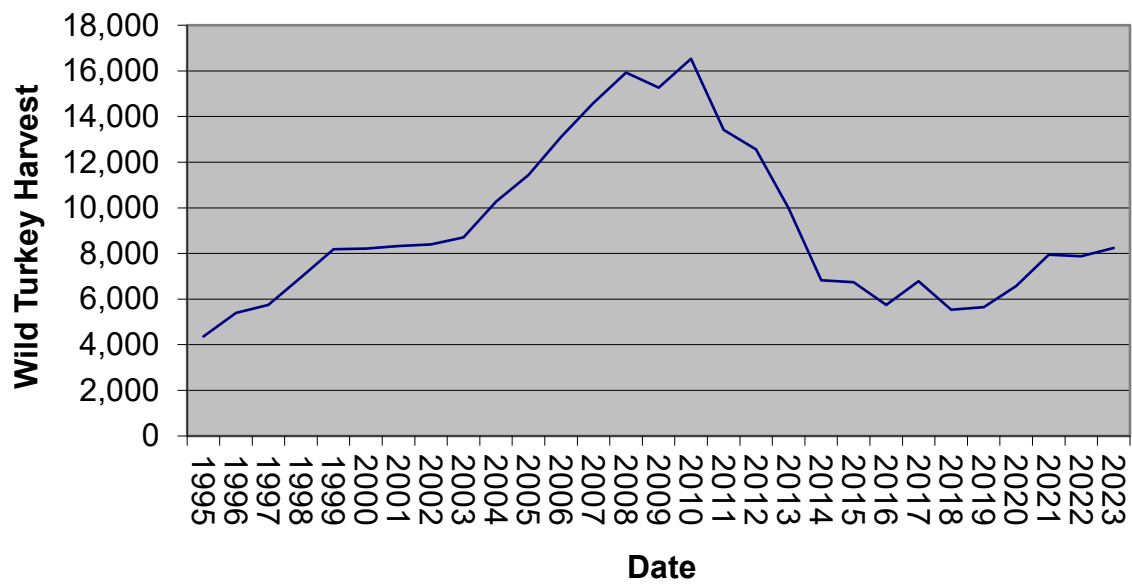


Fig. 2. State turkey harvest projections for South Dakota from 1995-2023.

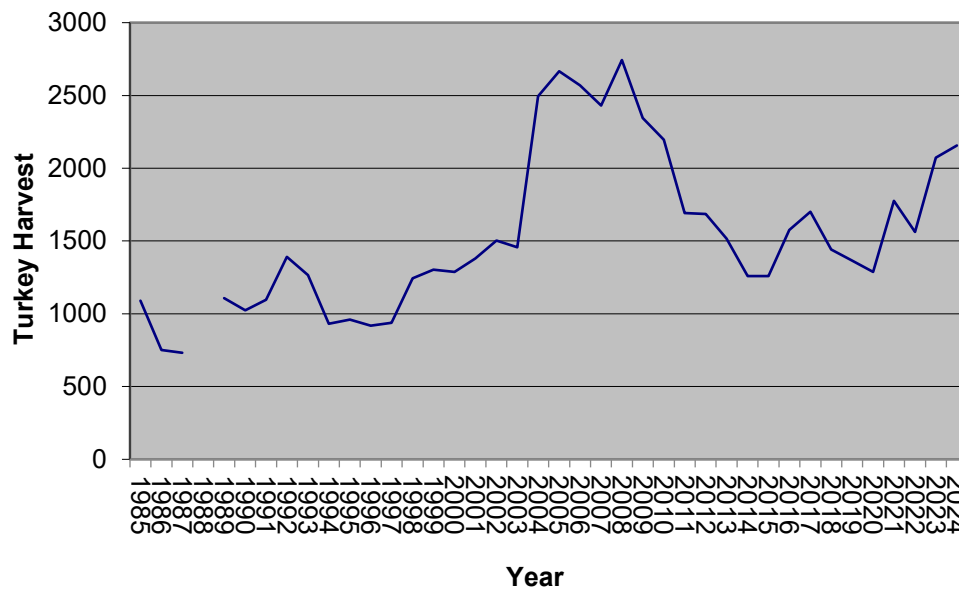


Fig. 3. Black Hills spring harvest projections from 1995-2024.

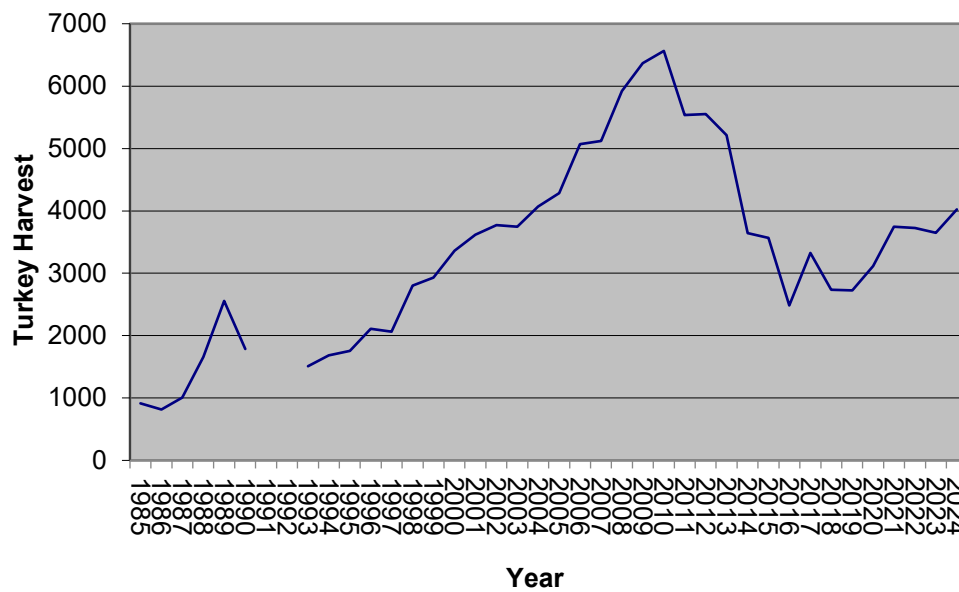


Fig. 4. Prairie spring harvest projections from 1995-2024.

RESEARCH

A research project in Gregory County evaluating survival and reproduction of Merriam's turkeys has completed field work in 2024-2025. Luke McCray is the M.S. student with West Virginia University and he is currently finishing up his thesis and publications. Dr. Chris Rota is the academic advisor on the study. This study is being funded by South Dakota NWTF, SDGFP, and National NWTF.

Recent Wild Turkey Research Publications

Tyl, R. M., C. T. Rota., and C. P. Lehman. 2023. Factors influencing survival of female eastern wild turkeys in northeastern South Dakota. Wildlife Society Bulletin: <http://doi.org/10.1002/wsb.1429>.

Lehman, C. P., Yarnall, M. J., A. R. Litt, C. T. Rota, and J. J. Rotella. 2022. Factors influencing rate of decline in a Merriam's wild turkey population. Journal of Wildlife Management: <https://doi.org/10.1002/jwmg.22240>.

Tyl, R. M., C. T. Rota., and C. P. Lehman. 2020. Factors influencing productivity of eastern wild turkeys in northeastern South Dakota. Ecology and Evolution 10(16): DOI: 10.1002/ece3.6583

Yarnall, M. J., A. R. Litt, C. P. Lehman, and J. J. Rotella. 2020. Precipitation and reproduction are negatively associated with female turkey survival. Journal of Wildlife Management 84:1-11.

REGULATION/LEGISLATION CHANGES

In spring of 2023 we changed our season dates for the Black Hills unit. Instead of opening the 2nd Saturday in April it is now opening on the 4th Saturday in April. This is a management change that could potentially protect some gobblers for early season breeding and enhance reproduction of Merriam's turkeys in the Black Hills unit. Further, all bow hunting must now occur at the same start date as the general shotgun seasons. Previous to this year bow hunters had a one week earlier start date. Some units changed in boundary and every 2 years number of licenses may change and are updated in our application. For 2025, the Black Hill is now a limited draw system for non-residents. Licenses were capped at 2,225 for non-residents.

EMERGING OR EVOLVING ISSUES

Licensing System

The [Go Outdoors South Dakota](https://license.gooutdoorssouthdakota.com/Licensing/CustomerLookup.aspx) system continues to be updated and available for both spring and fall turkey seasons.

<https://license.gooutdoorssouthdakota.com/Licensing/CustomerLookup.aspx>

RELEVANT LINKS

Wild Turkey Management Plan in South Dakota

A revised wild turkey plan has been completed and available for use. Please review our South Dakota Wild Turkey Management Plan for updates and management direction at:

https://gfp.sd.gov/UserDocs/docs/wild_turkey_action_plan_2021-2026_final.pdf

https://gfp.sd.gov/UserDocs/docs/turkey_management_plan2021-2030.pdf

MISCELLANEOUS

In 2021-22, 54 wild turkeys were trapped and relocated in South Dakota. In 2022-23, 50 wild turkeys were trapped and relocated in South Dakota. In 2023-24, 24 wild turkeys were trapped and relocated in South Dakota. In 2024-25, 128 wild turkeys were trapped and relocated in South Dakota.

TEXAS WILD TURKEY POPULATION STATUS REPORT - 2025

Western States Wild Turkey Technical Committee Meeting – April 7-9, 2025 South Padre Island, TX

Jason Hardin – Turkey Program Leader
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
P.O. Box 279
Buffalo, Texas 75831
512-934-8306 / Jason.hardin@tpwd.texas.gov

POPULATION STATUS

The Rio Grande wild turkey is the most numerous subspecies in Texas with a population estimate of 586,976 birds. The Rio Grande wild turkey population is found in the western 2/3 of Texas, primarily along and west of the Interstate 35 corridor and east of the Pecos River. Texas also hosts a small population of eastern wild turkeys in localized populations in the eastern third of Texas. Eastern wild turkeys number around 5,000 birds in 12 counties with an open season. A small population of approximately 500 Merriam's wild turkeys is in the Davis Mountains and Guadalupe Mountains of West Texas. The wild turkey distribution in Texas is illustrated in Figure 1.

In 2021, TPWD staff reengaged in a summer production survey using the recommended standardized approach set forth by the Southeast Wild Turkey Working Group and the National Wild Turkey Technical Committee. In 2024, TPWD staff observed 1,567 wild turkey, 2.66 Poults per Hen, and 3.88 poults per brood.

Texas' Small Game Harvest Survey provides a weak measure of the Rio Grande wild turkey population status in Texas. This survey historically goes out to 20,000 hunters at the end of February each year, but due to low reporting rates the survey effort was increased to 35,000 mail surveys and another 35,000 email surveys. Due to the timing of the survey, hunter and harvest data is not available for the 2023 spring turkey season until summer 2024. TPWD is currently evaluating our Small Game Harvest Survey and plan to readdress the wild turkey specific survey once all analyses are complete.

As of the 2024-25 season, Texas now requires mandatory wild turkey harvest reporting in all counties. Hunters who opted-in to a digital hunting license are required to report their harvested wild turkey immediately upon collection. All hunters with a paper license are required to report their harvested bird within 24-hours of take. Mandatory harvest reporting provides a more accurate and timely assessment of harvest and hunter effort.

There are 198 Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) routes in Texas. Breeding bird survey data shows a significant increasing trend in the Texas wild turkey population from 1966 to 2017 followed by a significant decline from 2018-2022 (Figure 2). Based on a strong reproductive season in 2023 and TPWD's summer turkey survey numbers, the BBS observations are predicted to continue to increase when 2023 numbers become available.

REPRODUCTION

Texas Parks and Wildlife staff reengaged in a statewide brood survey in 2021. Staff did not reach our minimum goal of 200 unique observations. Staff have expanded the survey to include TPWD-Law Enforcement and will investigate addition expansion into a public survey option.

Table 1: 2024 total number of hens, poults, males, and unknown turkeys observed during the survey in each region and at the statewide scale:

Wildlife Region	Turkey Observations	Poults Per Hen	Poults Per Brood	Hens with Broods	Male to Female Ratio
Region 1	205	2.06	3.92	0.51	0.49
Region 2	686	2.86	3.92	0.79	0.41
Region 3	233	2.94	3.93	0.80	1.13
Region 4	95	1.92	3.27	0.82	0.46
Region 5	348	2.68	3.92	0.64	1.42
Total	1,567	2.66	3.88	0.72	0.68

HARVEST

2023 Spring Turkey Season

In 2023, Texas' Small Game Harvest Survey was mailed to 35,000 hunters and emailed to another 35,000 hunters. The survey is mailed just prior to the spring turkey season. Therefore, the results are only for the previous spring season (2023). Survey results are typically published mid-summer. During the 2023 spring turkey season 66,345 hunters reported harvesting 23,631 wild turkeys. Hunters experienced a 35.20% success rate, which is below the long-term mean of 41.94%. Figure 3 identifies long-term spring hunter and harvest trends.

2023-2024 Fall Turkey Season

During the 2023-24 fall turkey season 64,377 hunters harvested 8,839 wild turkeys. This is above the long-term average of 55,233 fall hunters, but below the long-term mean of 18,224 fall birds harvested. There is a general trend away from fall hunting and a growing trend in spring turkey hunting in Texas.

2024 Eastern Turkey Season

TPWD has required mandatory reporting for all harvested Eastern wild turkeys since 1995. Reporting is completed through TPWD's Texas Hunt & Fish App or online (www.tpwd.texas/turkey). The season begins annually on April 22 and continues through May 14th. During the 2024 eastern turkey season hunters reported harvesting 143 wild turkeys. This is down - 23% from 2023 and down on par for the 3-years average. The 2025 season is currently ongoing.

2024 TEXAS HUNTING ACCIDENT REPORT

Texas sold 1,246,797 hunting licenses during 2023-24 hunting season. The 2024 Texas Hunting Accident Report identified 19 hunting related accidents. Of those 01 was fatal. Twelve (12) of the hunting accidents involved shotguns, 05 involved rifles, and 02 involved handguns. Of the 19 incidents, 10 were associated with dove hunting, 03 were associated with deer hunting, 01 feral hog/peccary hunting, 02 quail hunting, 01 duck hunting, 01 snake related event, and 01 event hunting exotic game. There were no wild turkey hunting accidents reported during the 2023-24 hunting season.

RESEARCH

UAV-FLIR Survey Methodology

Under review for the 2025 Wild Turkey Symposium Proceedings

Wild Turkey Survival and Habitat Use in the Pineywoods of Texas

Texas Parks and Wildlife staff conducted a pilot study in the Pineywoods along the Louisiana border in 2021. TPWD partnered with Louisiana State University (LSU) in 2022 to expand the project to look at demographics of a native wild turkey population contiguous with Louisiana, a native population that is genetically isolated from other populations in east Texas, and a recently restocked population. A third extant population was included during the 2023 trapping season. LSU is also monitoring wild turkeys in Louisiana to compare demographics across varying ranges and levels of isolation and genetic relatedness to wild turkeys in Louisiana.

Landscape Assessment of Wild Turkey Roosting Habitat in the Texas Rolling Plains

Texas Parks and Wildlife contracted with Texas A&M University to assess landscape changes in the Rolling Plains over the past 20 years. The focus is on changes in historic roosting cover identified by Texas Tech researchers in the early 2000s. In addition, Texas A&M University will look at changes in vegetative cover over the same time (2000-2022). This research is in response to an apparent Rolling Plains Turkey Decline.

Disease Surveillance in the South Texas Wild Turkey Populations

During the 2025 wild turkey trapping season TPWD staff trapped 774 wild turkeys, collected serum and blood spots on 452 wild turkeys, and contributed samples to 08 university research projects. Serum samples tested for Avian Influenza, Pullorum-Typhoid, and Mycoplasma through the Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory (TVMDL). No samples were returned as positive.

Blood Smear samples were provided to the Biological Science Lab at Tarleton State University to test for Reticuloendotheliosis Virus (REV) and Lymphoproliferative Disease Virus (LPDV). This is the first large sample effort to test for LPDV in Texas. Those samples are still being analyzed. Of the 213 samples submitting in 2024, 4 were positive for REV (1.91%) and 63 or 29% were positive for LPDV. Two of the 4 REV positive birds were coinfecting with LPDV.

Evaluation of Super-stocking on Genetics and Recruitment of Wild Turkeys in Texas

Using contemporary population genetic approaches, we will assess the relative contribution of various Eastern Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo silvestris*) super-stocking sources on the current Wild Turkey population in eastern Texas. In addition, based on release histories, we will test for hybridization between Rio Grande Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo intermedia*) and Eastern Wild Turkey, including for hybrid vigor among the existing Wild Turkey population across the Post Oak ecoregion. The goal of our project is to determine if any super-stocking source contributed more to the success of Eastern Wild Turkey populations than others in the Post Oak ecoregion. If so, the best practice in future translocation efforts would be to source individuals from those regions showing the greatest success in Texas. Additionally, we will use contemporary landscape genetic analyses to understand gene flow among Eastern Wild Turkey in Texas. After determining gene flow, we will estimate levels of functional dispersal among Wild Turkey sample locations to gain insights into how current land management for turkeys is influencing dispersal and survival of the species in eastern Texas. Collectively, these data will provide needed insights into Wild Turkey × landscape dynamics across east Texas. These methods will allow us to evaluate relationships between landscape × super-stock source genetic diversity and how they interact to affect local population success. This information will allow Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to better plan land management, identify release site habitat, and select successful source populations for sustaining and improving Wild Turkey populations across the region.

REGULATION CHANGES

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission recently approved language clarification for the zone boundary in Hill County (East of Interstate Highway 35E) and added Lubbock County to the North Zone turkey season. suite of new wild turkey regulations.

EMERGING OR EVOLVING ISSUES

Rolling Plains Turkey Decline

There is an apparent declining wild turkey population in the Rolling Plains in Texas. Staff conducted disease and parasite surveillance in 2021 but found no significant issues. Rates of infection were low and were presented to the working group in 2021. TPWD funded a GIS assessment of landscape features in the Rolling Plains that began in fall 2022 to look for wild turkey habitat changes on the landscape that may be influence wild turkey declines. Staff have not yet discussed changing seasons or bag limits in response to the apparent decline.

Wildfires

The Smokehouse Creek fire burned over 1mil acres in 3 days in the Texas Panhandle during the winter of 2024. Large wildfires have occurred more frequently in Texas in recent years. Loss of limited roosting cover in association with wildfires is a concern for the future sustainability of wild turkeys in their historic ranges in the Rolling Plains.

MISCELLANEOUS

Habitat Delivery

Northeast Texas Conservation Delivery Network

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has contacted with NWTF to deliver state hunting stamp dollars and Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration dollars to focal landscapes in east Texas. There has been an emphasis on creating open forest understory conditions using prescribed fire and midstory herbicide treatments. To date, the Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture's Northeast Texas Conservation Delivery Network has delivered over 10,339 acres in management practices in focal landscapes totaling close to \$1,00,000 in habitat management practices.

Restoration

TPWD reengaged in Eastern wild turkey restoration efforts in 2014. Over the past 10 years TPWD, with the assistance of 12 states wildlife agencies and NWTF, has released 1,145 eastern wild turkeys at 13 sites in east Texas. Another 320 birds were released at 4 sites in 2007-08 during super stocking research. In addition, TPWD released 1,303 Rio Grande wild turkeys at 14 sites along the Trinity River from just south of Dallas County to Madison County. Texas utilizes a super stocking approach to these restoration efforts releasing 80-100 birds per site at a ratio of 1 male per 3 females. Restoration efforts are focused on three priority landscapes (PA): The Neches River PA following the Neches River from Lake Palestine south to the Angelina National Forest; the Trinity River PA from just south of Dallas County south to Walker and Grimes Counties; and the Sulphur River PA following the Sulphur River, White Oak Creek and Cypress Creek watersheds across all or portions of Bowie, Camp, Cass, Delta, Franklin, Hopkins, Morris, Red River and Titus Counties.

During the winter of 2025 TPWD staff released 252 Rio Grande wild turkeys in Freestone, Leon, Milam, and Williamson Counties. Rio Grande wild turkeys were trapped in Clay, Coryell, Duval, Uvalde, Williamson, and Zavalla Counties. Staff released another 14 eastern wild turkeys from Rhode Island at a release site in Hopkins Counties.

RELEVANT LINKS

[Texas Hunting Accident Report \(2002-2022\)](#)

[Texas Hunting Regulations](#)

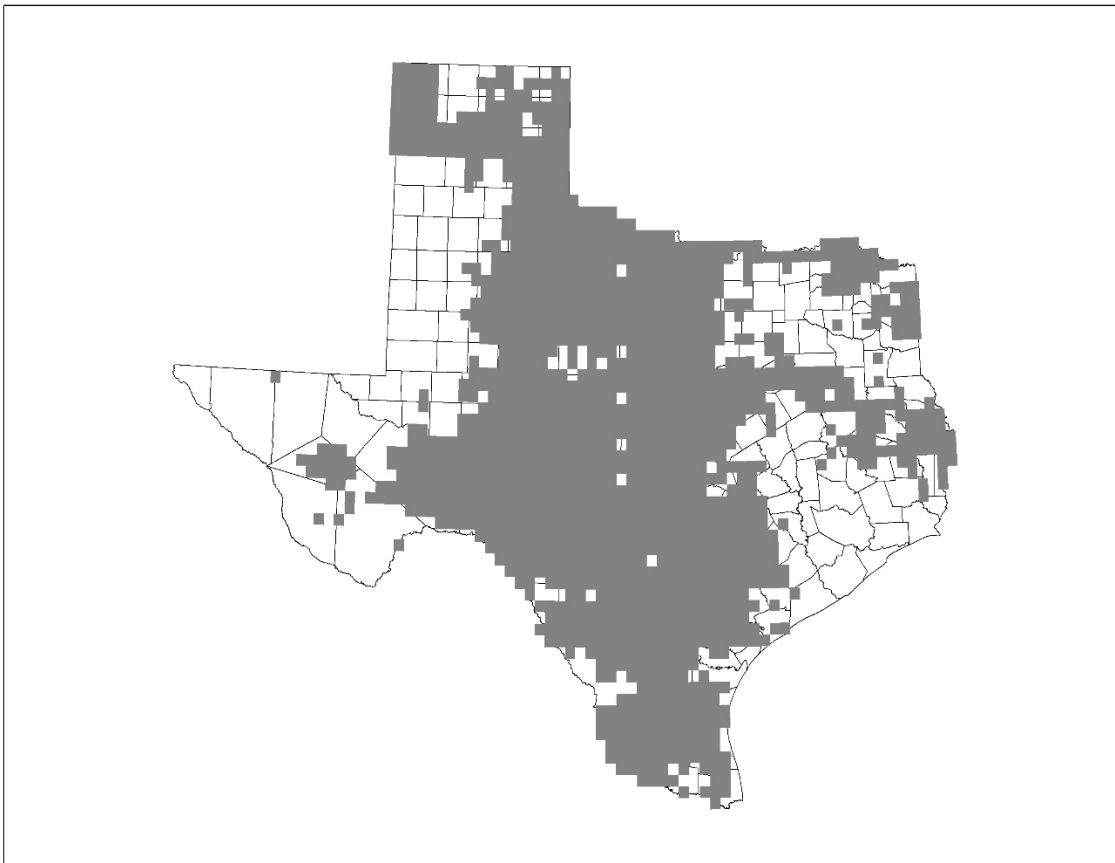


Figure 1. Texas wild turkey distribution.

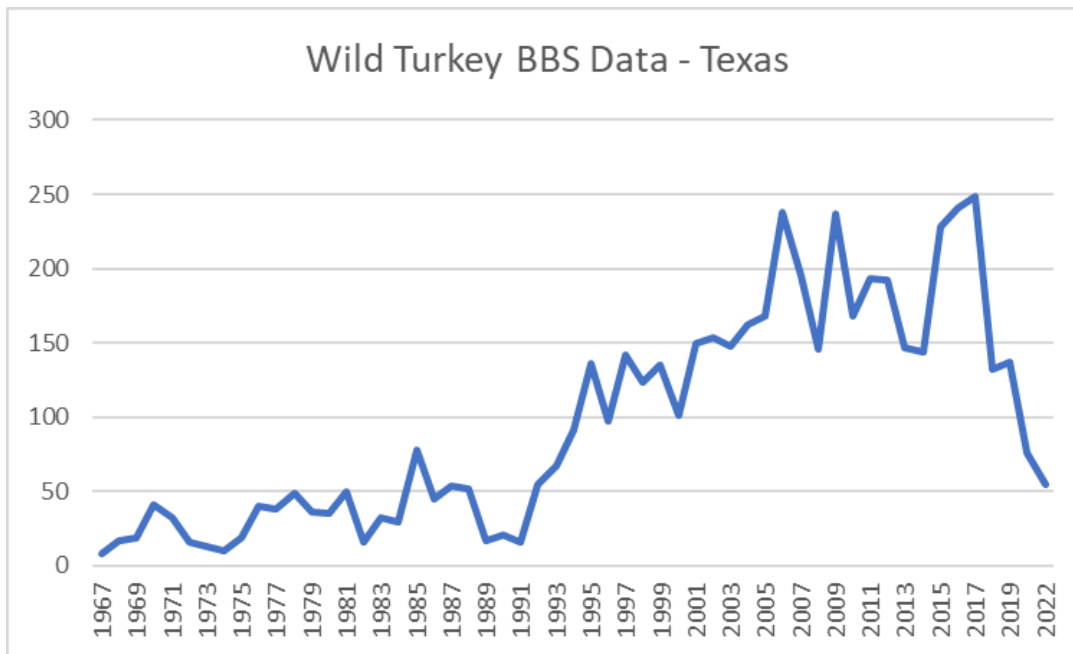


Figure 2. Breed bird survey trends for wild turkeys in Texas (1966-2021).

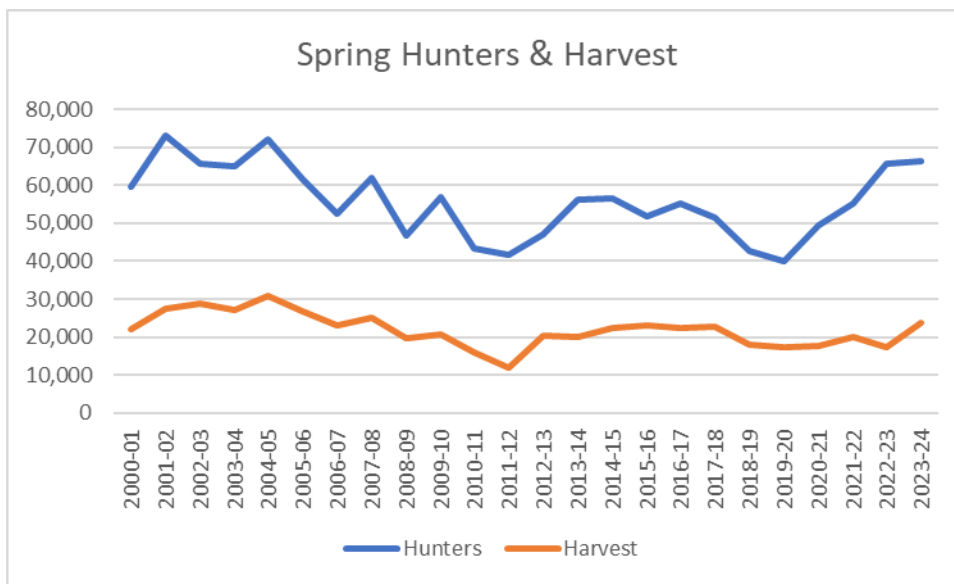


Figure 3. Spring turkey hunters and harvest as determined by TPWD's Small Game Harvest Survey.

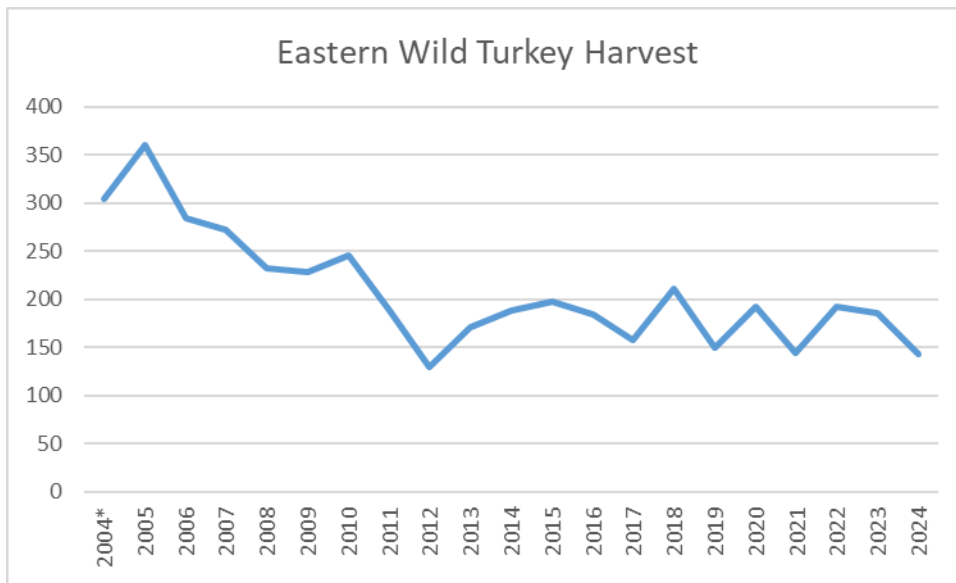


Figure 4. Eastern wild turkey harvest.

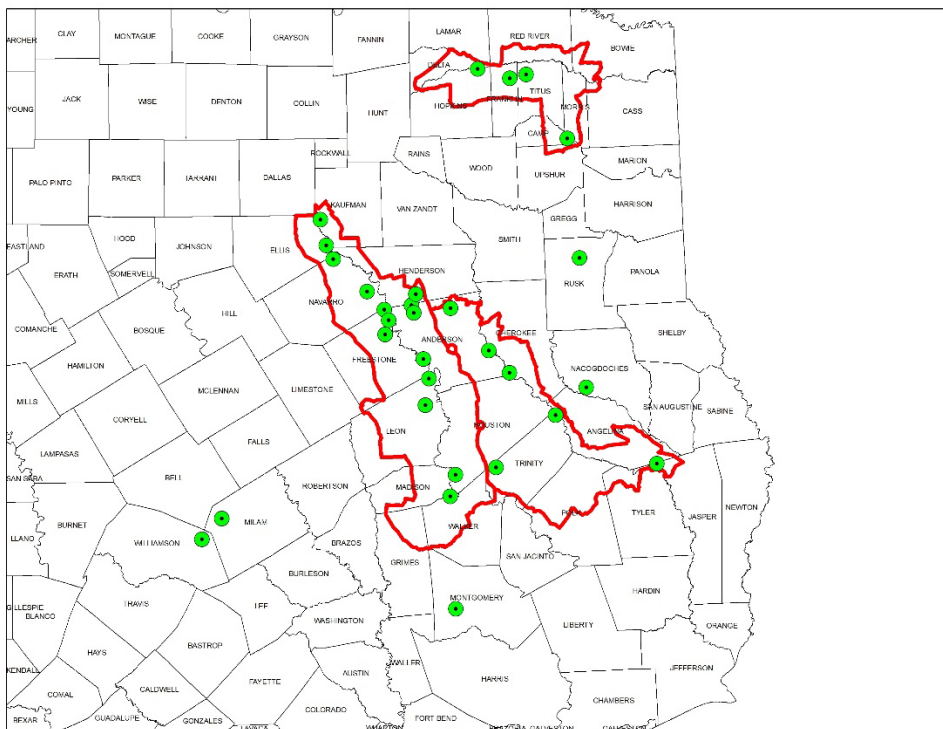


Figure 5. Super Stocking from 2007 to 2025.

UTAH WILD TURKEY POPULATION STATUS REPORT – 2025

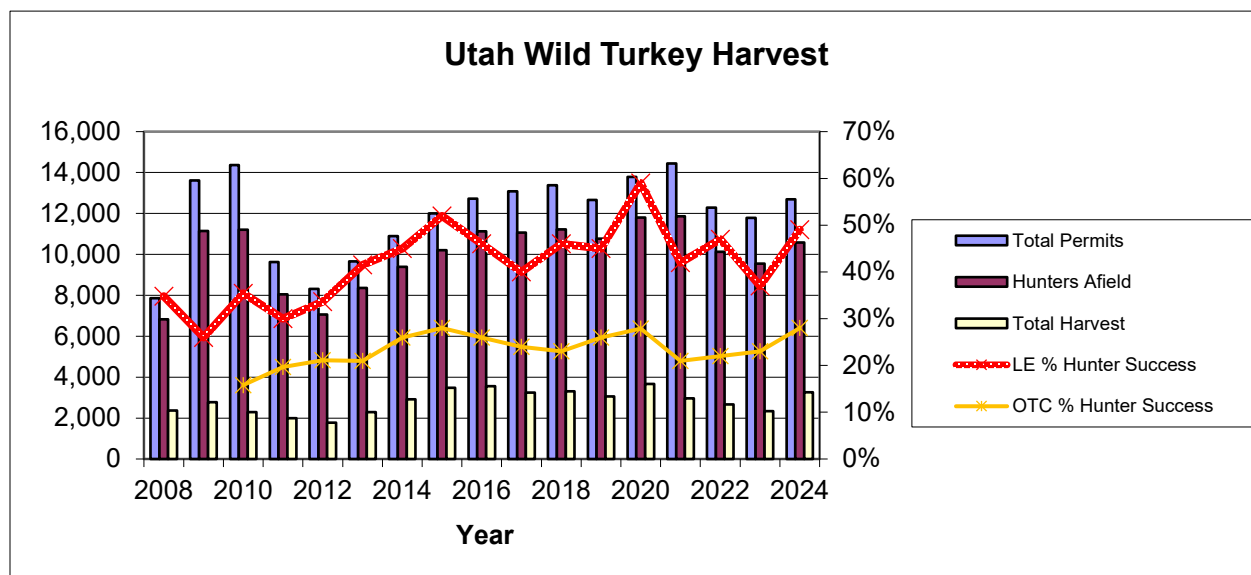
Western States Wild Turkey Technical Committee Meeting – April 7th – 9th, 2025
South Padre Island, TX

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POPULATION STATUS

Utah is host to both Rio Grande and Merriam's turkeys — most of the population resemble Rios phenotypically, but substantial hybridization between subspecies exists. Population estimates are not formally calculated, but assuming ~10% of the population is harvested during the spring hunts there are approximately 32,590 wild turkeys in Utah.

Harvest trends have been steadily increasing with expanding populations until recently. Statewide turkey populations have declined likely due to drought impacts — less water, vegetation, and insects may have impacted recruitment in the last few years, until the winter of 2022/2023, which produced more snowfall than previous year; dating back to the 80s. This likely resulted in some winter loss in some areas, though supplemental feeding was provided in appropriate locations. Since the following spring and summer provided more mesic areas than usual, production increased though the number of adults had declined. Contrastingly, the winter of 2023/2024 was mild and still provided moisture, creating another spring conducive to high production. We anticipate a population increase this year.



HARVEST

Hunt History

Fall: A fall either-sex hunt was opened in the fall of 2014 (293 permits), permits were expanded to 700 in 2015, 1178 in 2016, 885 in 2017, and 3455 in 2018. In 2019 unlimited permits were available in limited areas in the state for private lands only resulting in 6,167 permits sold, 7,710 in 2020, 4,619 in 2021, and 3,610 in 2022 (this is the only year individuals were limited to one permit per person in the fall). In 2023, permits were reduced and a total of 2,625 permits were purchased, and harvested a total of 898 turkeys. The 2024-25 results will be available later this spring.

Spring: The first spring hunt opened in 1967, closed in 1970, then resumed in 1971. Populations remained at a relatively low level until the mid-1980's when populations begin to consistently increase. Through 2007 Rios and Merriam's were managed separately, but as populations increased and subspecies hybridized management was combined. In 2024, a total of 12,689 permits were sold and 3,259 turkeys were harvested in the limited-entry and over-the-counter seasons combined.

Season Framework

Hunter requirements:

Required to have passes hunter education if born after Dec 31, 1965. There is no minimum age.

Fall season structure:

Permit numbers are determined by region (five regions exist; though the Northeastern Region does not implement a fall hunt). Within four of the regions, there are hunt areas designed to reduce populations where there are significant human-turkey conflicts. Permits can be purchased over the counter until the permit quota for an area is reached. The hunt is either-sex (though permits are now restricted to two beardless and one either-sex permit per individual — implemented for the first time this fall), and legal weapon include shotgun, rimfire, or airgun (implemented for the first time in the fall of 2023). Season dates can be set annually within an Oct 1 to Feb 28 time frame, which is what they were for the 2024-25 season. Fall hunts were implemented in the Northern, Central, and Southeastern regions for the 2024-25 season. The fall season dates are chosen by June 1 each year.

Spring season structure:

Limited Entry: Permit numbers are determined individually for each of the five UDWR regions, and hunt areas include the entire region. Permit numbers aim to harvest 10% of the overall population in the spring with 30% of the spring harvest occurring during the LE hunt (although we do have the flexibility to allow for 20% or 25% harvest to occur during the LE hunt if populations are in a low cycle). Permit numbers are set annually and take winter conditions, hunter crowding, habitat accessibility, and other factors into account. The spring LE hunt is bearded-only, shotgun or bow. Season dates are April 12-24, 2025. Fifteen percent of LE permits are reserved for youth. If the

youth does not harvest during the LE hunt, they may continue to hunt through the youth and general season hunts.

Youth Hunt: The youth hunt is statewide, excluding closed areas and Native American trust lands. This year's season dates are April 25-April 27, 2025, but if a youth does not harvest during this hunt, they may continue to hunt through the general season.

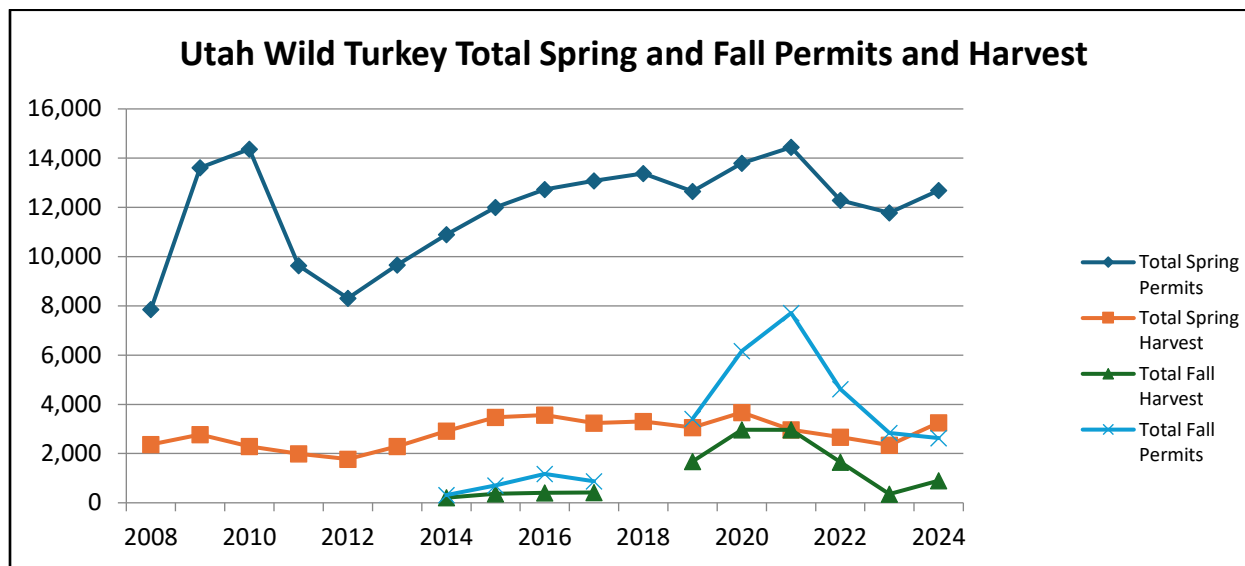
General Season: This is a statewide hunt, excluding closed areas and Native American trust lands. The spring general season is unlimited over the counter. The spring GS hunt is bearded-only, shotgun or bow. Season dates are April 28 – May 31, 2025.

Bag limits: 1 turkey per permit. A hunter is limited to three permits for fall (starting in 2023: one either-sex and two beardless) and one bearded turkey for the spring.

Shooting hours: 30 minutes before official sunrise to 30 minutes after official sunset.

Harvest Data

Harvest data is collected annually via an online and phone harvest survey. The harvest survey provides estimates of total hunters, total harvest, days afield, and success. There has been a long term upward trend in turkey numbers, hunters and harvest.



RESEARCH

The research project entitled “The effect of riparian habitat restoration on Rio Grande Turkey habitat use and recruitment in the Central Utah Forests habitat zone” has concluded. The study was implemented to study Rio Grande wild turkeys in the Escalante River watershed to acquire information on nesting habitat, recruitment, and winter habitat use, particularly in response to Russian olive removal. The information is updated here: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5mq4673m>

In 2020 and 2021, GPS transmitters that upload to Argos satellites were deployed. Two of those radios are still functioning on live birds and 7 were redeployed this year after being recovered. Currently deployed Argos enabled GPS transmitters include (need manual updating):

Turkey ID	Date Deployed	Age	Sex	Weight	Capture Location	Last Signal
NR - Pilot Mts 3	2/4/2021	A	F	6.2	Paradise	3/23/2021
NR - Pilot Mts 1	2/4/2021	A	F	6.2	Paradise	8/18/2021
NR - Pilot Mts 7	2/2/2021	A	F	6.8	Paradise	8/18/2021
NR - Pilot Mts 4	2/4/2021	A	F	6	Avon	4/8/2021
NR - Pilot Mts 2	2/4/2021	J	F	6	Avon	5/18/2021
NR - Pilot Mts 5	2/4/2021	F	F	5.3	Avon	3/31/2021
NR- Pilot Mts 6	2/4/2021	A	F	6	Avon	8/18/2021
CR - Davenport 4	1/6/2020	J	F	7.2	Mendon	1/16/2022
CR - Davenport 1	1/3/2020	J	F	6.2	Paradise	11/2/2021

In the winter of 2020-2021 turkey captures and translocations focused on areas in which wild turkeys caused nuisance/depredation complaints. Regional staff had questions on the behavior of individual flocks and radios employed, both to understand movements of the populations generating complaints in the winter, and survival and movements in release areas. To answer these questions GPS logging backpacks were deployed. These store-on-board GPS transmitters have a VHF (very high frequency) signal to locate them in the field and then can be downloaded to a laptop via a UHF (ultra high frequency) antenna.

Specifically, transmitters attached to turkeys released in the Corinne areas appear to have low survival, with one bird having moved to Promontory point. Birds released on Promontory have had relatively high survival and have remained in the vicinity of the release site. Birds in the Provo Bench area move substantial distances along the Wasatch front — up to 15 miles north of their winter urban home range. Transmitters attached to turkeys in the Mona bench area also showed substantial movement, and have left the monitored area. A new release site was being investigated on the Tintic Mountains, however, the data indicates that survival is low and it may not be a viable release site. Birds translocated to the Abajo Mountains showed excellent survival and have demonstrated fidelity to the release site. Birds translocated to Monroe Mountain have had mixed success but have found suitable habitat.

Release Location	Type	Number	Apparent Survival (%)
Tintic Mountains	Translocation	2	0

Mona Bench	Nuisance Population	2	No Data
Provo	Nuisance Population	2	50
Abajo Mountains	Translocation	4	100
Corinne	Translocation	4	33
Promontory	Translocation	3	66
Monroe Mountain	Translocation	3	33

The information received from these transmitters will allow us to better gauge the efficacy of translocations, via the movements of turkeys post-translocation, and their survival. This will increase the success of our translocations and ultimately the turkey population in the state.

Utah accepted Rios from Texas on January 23, 2025. We deployed transmitters on 12 Texas turkeys (received 26; three male, nine female, all adults). We deployed one Track Tag transmitter (on a recaptured Texas turkey), and 11 ATS transmitters. One died initially before release, and we have had 5 mortalities (coyote, cougar, and unknown predation). Birds were held in a soft release pen overnight, then released when disease test results came back negative the next day.

To compare translocated birds to resident birds, we deployed 14 transmitters on resident birds in the same location as our release site on February 21, 2023. One was a Track Tag, the rest were ATS, and two have died from predation to date.

REGULATION CHANGES

- In 2023, the Utah legislature has enacted H.B. 469, stating that rabbit, hare, and turkeys (in the fall season only) can be legally harvested with a pre-charged pneumatic air rifle that fires a single projectile with compressed air released from a chamber that is built into the rifle, pressurized at a minimum of 2,000 pounds per square inch from a high compression device or source, such as a hand pump, compressor, or scuba tank. The DWR recommended that the air rifle must be at least a .25 caliber and shoot a projectile weighing 18 grains or more and produce at least 30-foot-pounds of energy at the muzzle. These recommendations were approved at the Wildlife Board meeting on June 8, 2023.
- The DWR recommended that fall permits will be issued as two beardless permits and one hunter's choice permit, to target hen harvest, which was also approved.
- The statewide turkey management plan was open in 2022-2023 for revision, and all changes were approved.

MISCELLANEOUS

Nuisance or Depredation

In 2013 legislation was passed that guides management of turkeys causing damage. Utah developed depredation/nuisance guidelines to help facilitate the appropriate response to resolving turkey problems that may arise. Utah has a Turkey Depredation Rule that spells out how depredating (causing visible, persistent, and detrimental impacts to private property) turkeys will be handled. Educational brochures have also been developed to assist landowners that experience turkey-related issues. Nuisance complaints are dealt with by removing and relocating, targeted for fall hunts, offering landowner permits to target problem turkeys, education, habitat projects and other efforts.

Translocations

Utah traps and translocates nuisance turkeys to areas of unoccupied habitat or to supplement existing populations. Over the 2017-2018 2154 turkeys were moved within the state and 85 were given to Nevada. In 2018-2019, 2,154 turkeys were translocated within Utah; in 2019-2020, 1,143 turkeys were moved, in 2020-2021, 1,443 turkeys were relocated, in 2021-2022 season, 722 turkeys were moved within the state, in 2022-2023, 1,258 turkeys were translocated, and in 2023-2024, 908 turkeys were translocated. The 2024-25 data isn't available yet, but one region did translocate over 400 turkeys.

WYOMING WILD TURKEY POPULATION STATUS REPORT - 2025
Western States Wild Turkey Technical Committee Meeting – April 7th – 9th, 2025
South Padre Island, TX

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POPULATION STATUS

Wyoming does not directly measure, estimate or model wild turkey numbers. Instead, spring gobbler harvest is used to index wild turkey populations (Figure 1). Following a population peak in 2009, wild turkey numbers declined dramatically, especially in the Black Hills, and bottomed out in 2014. In 2016 & 2017 overwinter and spring weather conditions favored productivity and survival, and wild turkey numbers responded and increased substantially in most parts of the State. The 2018/19 winter was moderately severe and resulted in reduced survival and reproductive success. This was followed by generally mild winters and dry, warm spring weather in 2020 and 2021, which lead to excellent poult production and annual survival. As a result, populations again increased. In 2022, 2023 and 2024 poult production returned to near average values and the winter of 2022-23 was severe in parts of Wyoming. However, most areas inhabited by wild turkeys saw normal to moderately severe winter conditions. In 2024, extreme drought conditions plagued Wyoming, especially the Black Hills. Consequently, the response in wild turkey numbers across the state has been a bit of a mixed bag, with some areas witnessing substantial increases over the past three to four-years, while in other locations wild turkey numbers have been more stable or dropped slightly.

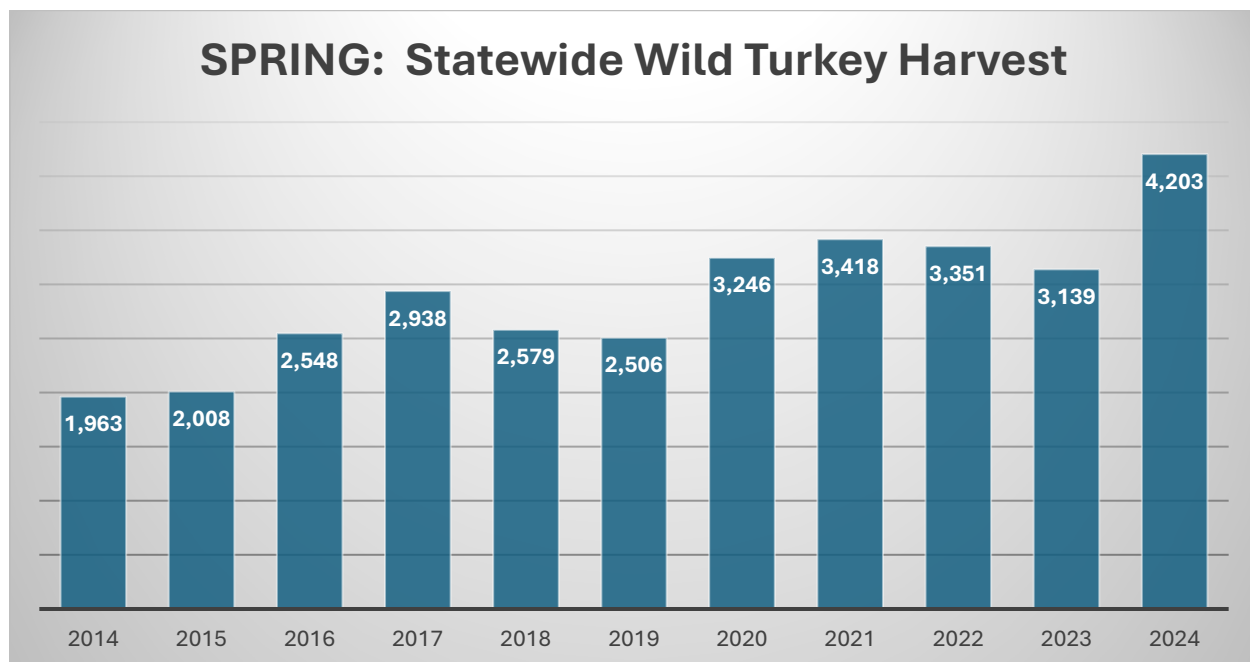


Figure 1. Wyoming Statewide Spring Gobbler Harvest.

REPRODUCTION

Historically, the Black Hills was the only area in Wyoming where regular, systematic poult surveys are conducted. However, this changed in 2024, for the first time poult surveys were conducted in Natrona and Converse counties. Game and Fish is currently working on an app to survey poult production; the hope is that other areas of the state will participate in 2025. Wyoming Game and Fish Department personnel and personnel from other State and Federal agencies count and classify by age and sex wild turkeys during the month of August. In 2020 and 2021, poult production and survival in the Black Hills were some of the highest recorded (Figure 2). In 2022 and 2023, observed poult:hen and poult:brood ratios were closer to long-term averages. The 2022 and 2024 values are likely biased low due to barren hens, because yearling Merriam’s hens are generally less than 30% successful at producing a brood in the Black Hills. Consequently, we have found the poult per brood ratio to be a better indicator of relative reproductive success and future harvest potential.

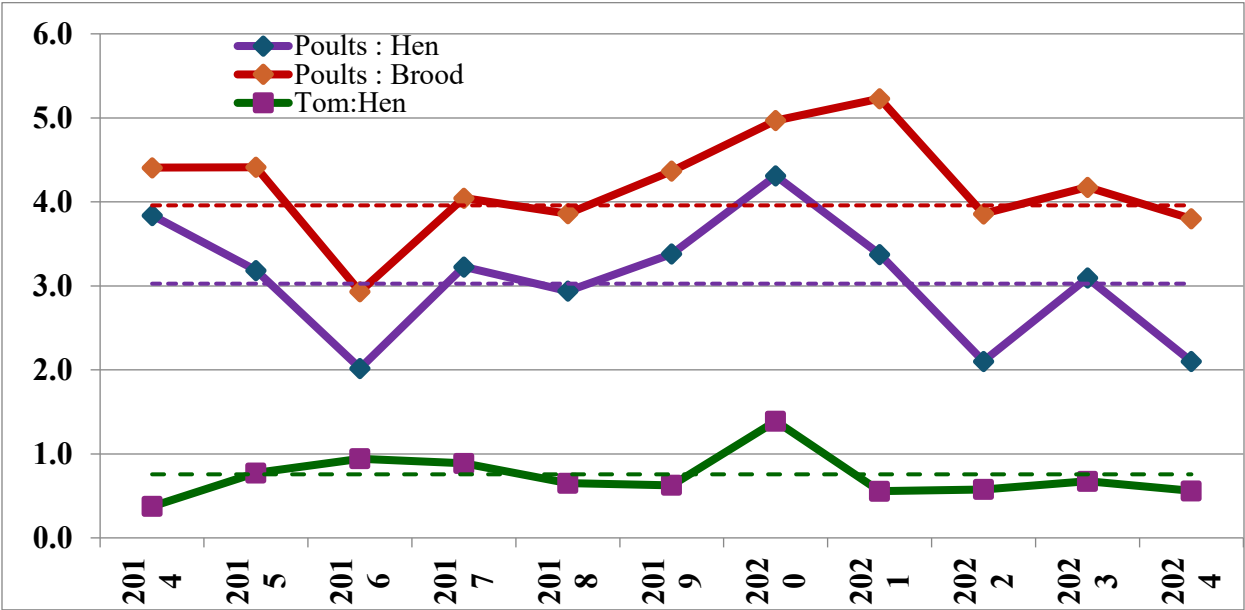


Figure 2. Wild turkey productivity and August tom:hen ratios in the Black Hills of Wyoming (2014-2023). Dashed lines represent long-term (1998 – 2024) mean values. In 2024 statewide totals were included

HARVEST

2024 Spring Turkey Season

Wild turkey numbers began to rebound in 2020 and COVID mitigation measures that year resulted in increased resident hunter participation. Spring of 2020 saw a 33% increase in resident hunter numbers from the previous 8-year average, a period during which overall resident participation did not vary widely. However, non-resident participation dropped significantly in 2020 with COVID

travel restrictions but increased to historically high numbers in 2021 (Figure 3). The combination of hunter participation responses to COVID restrictions in 2020 and 2021, along with an increasing wild turkey population, led to a peak harvest in 2021. The 2021 harvest exceed that of 2010 when wild turkey populations were in all likelihood higher. In 2022, even with robust wild turkey populations, resident hunter participation fell back to about the mean level experienced since 2010, while non-resident hunter numbers remained high (Figure 3). This may account for the slight drop in total harvest at a time when wild turkey numbers were on the rise. Resident hunter participation increased dramatically in the spring of 2024, nearing the peak in 2020. Non-resident hunter participation has been steadily increasing since 2022 and is expected to continue to increase as surrounding states limit non-resident hunter participation. It is also notable that in the Black Hills, which provide Wyoming’s primary public land hunting opportunity and are responsible for over half of the State’s spring harvest, non-resident hunter participation is now over 60% greater than that of residents (Figure 3a).

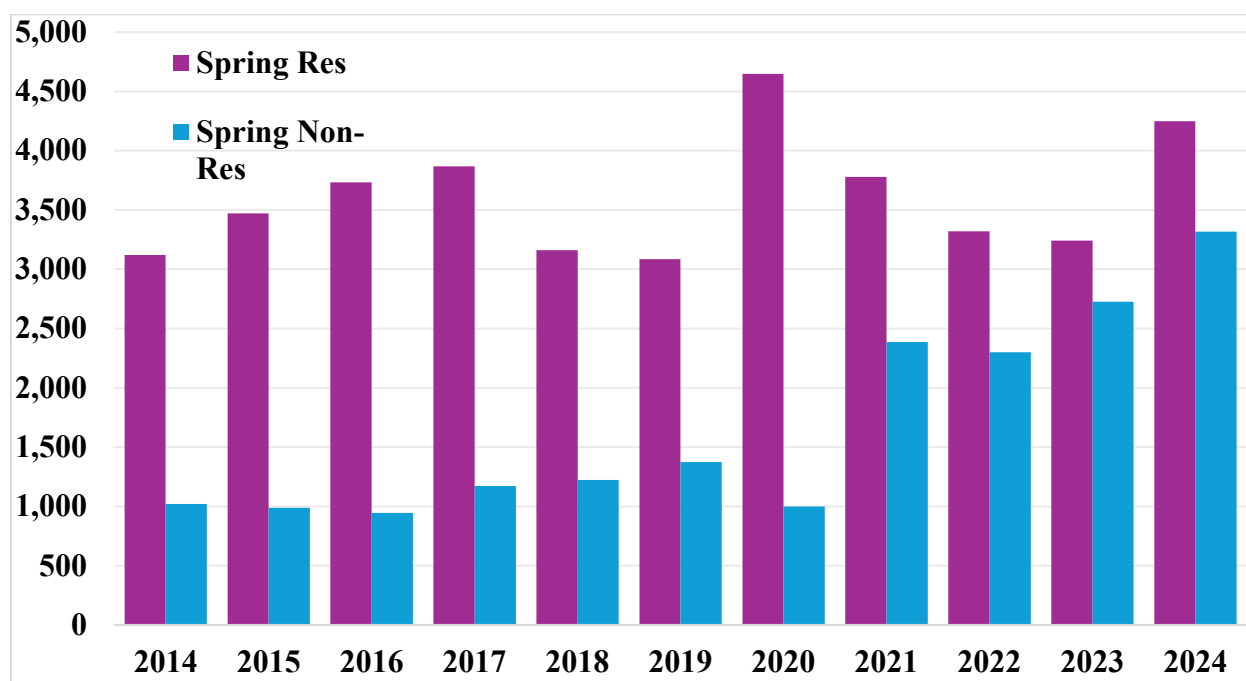


Figure 3. Wyoming Statewide Spring Wild Turkey Hunter Number by Residency

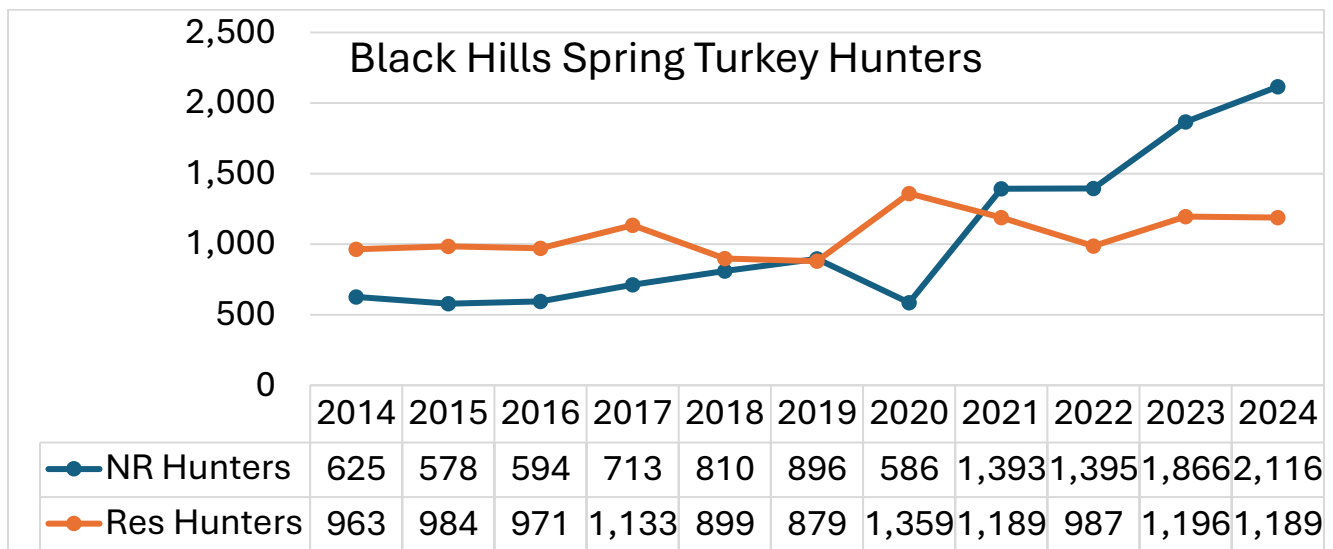


Figure 3a. Wyoming Black Hills Spring Wild Turkey Hunter Number by Residency

Total hunter success generally increased as populations of wild turkeys increased between 2014 and 2017 before dropping slightly in 2018 and again in 2019 as populations declined (Figure 4). As populations began to rebound in 2020, hunter success climbed. In 2021, total success slightly increased, while success for residents declined even though by all appearances turkey numbers had increased, and total harvest was up. Success increased from 2023, which codifies the general perception that wild turkey numbers have generally held steady or increased statewide over the past few years. Total success has hovered around 60% with the exemption of 2023.

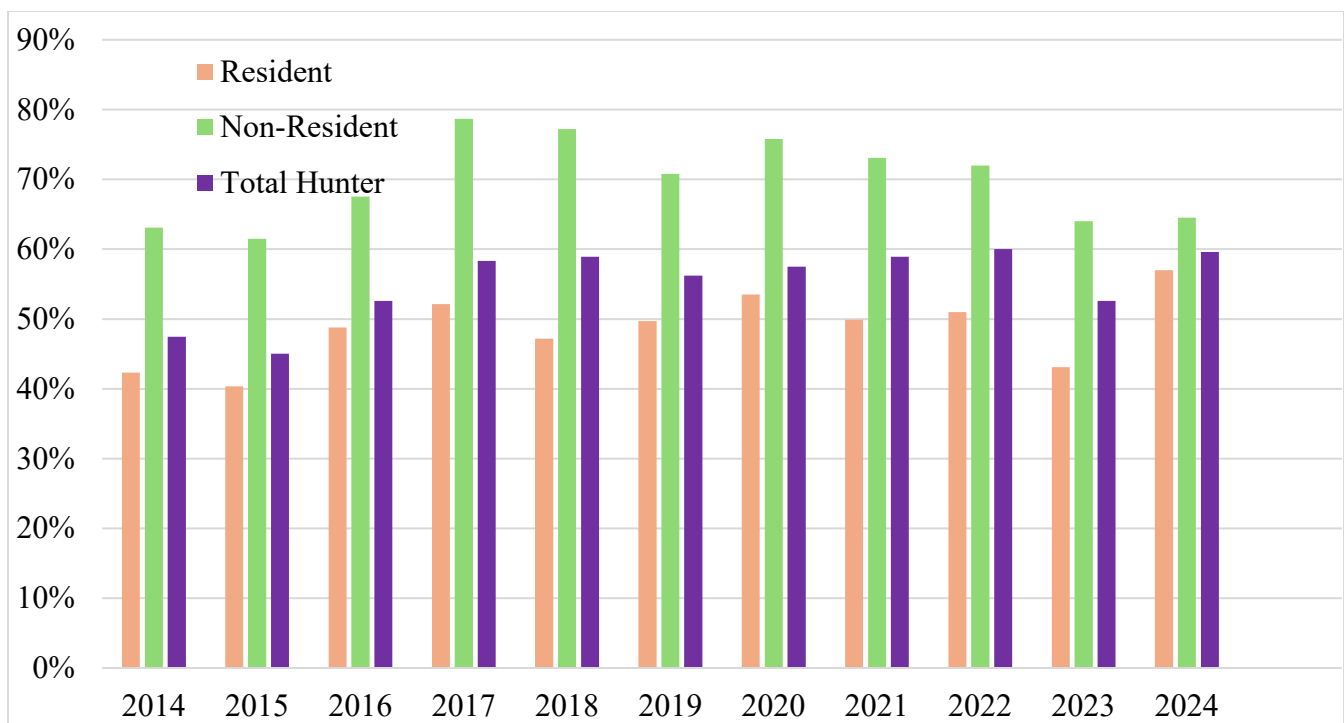


Figure 4. Wyoming, Statewide Spring Wild Turkey Hunter Success.

Spring hunter effort, as measured by days hunted per harvest (Figure 5), normally follows an inverse pattern to hunter success. Total hunter success (resident and non-resident combined) increased from 2020 through 2022 as effort declined, while in contrast total harvest dropped slightly. This suggests that while total harvest declined a bit, wild turkey numbers continued to increase between 2020 and 2024. The 2023 drop in spring harvest dovetails with the decline in success and increase in effort and may in fact reflect an overall reduction in the statewide population of wild turkeys. The increase in harvest in 2024 is likely due to steady turkey populations and the increased number of hunters. However, as noted below, fall harvest steadily increased between 2021 and 2023 (Figure 7), suggesting an increasing population.

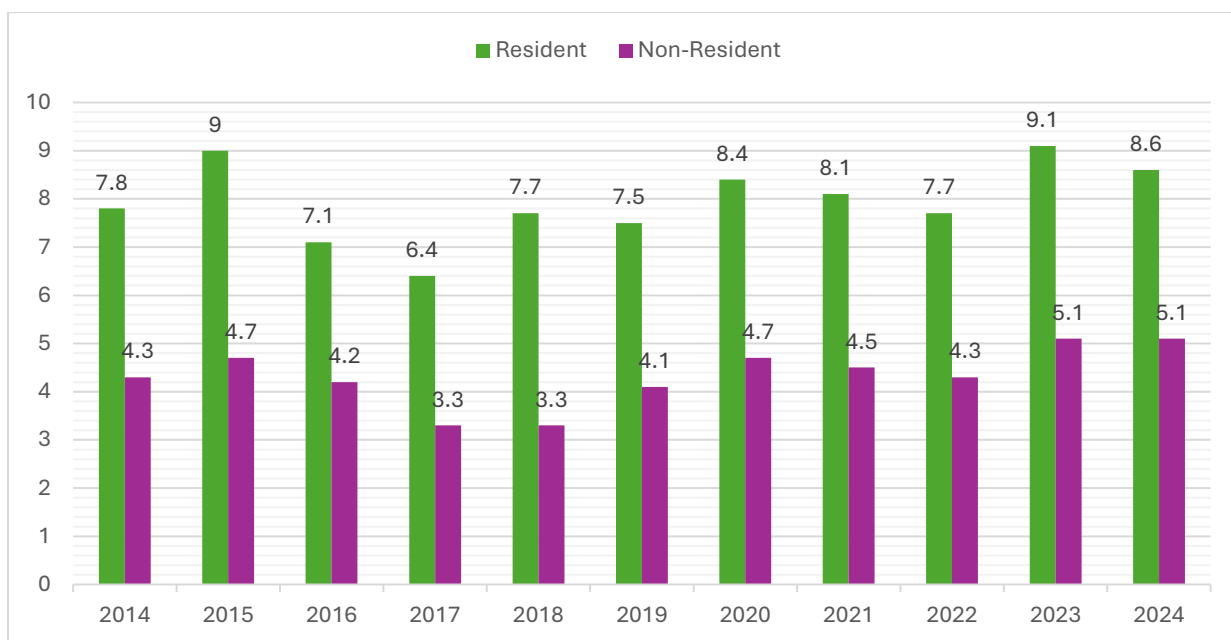


Figure 5. Wyoming, Spring Wild Turkey Hunter Effort (days per harvest) by residency.

2023 Fall Turkey Season

In recent years, resident fall participation has fluctuated, but generally remained stable, while nonresident hunter numbers have increased slightly (Figure 6). However, 2023 harvest data suggests there was about a 30% - 40% increase above what has been about the average fall, resident participation. This could be an indicator of increased populations as resident sportsmen are observing more turkeys and thus decided to pursue a fall hunting opportunity.

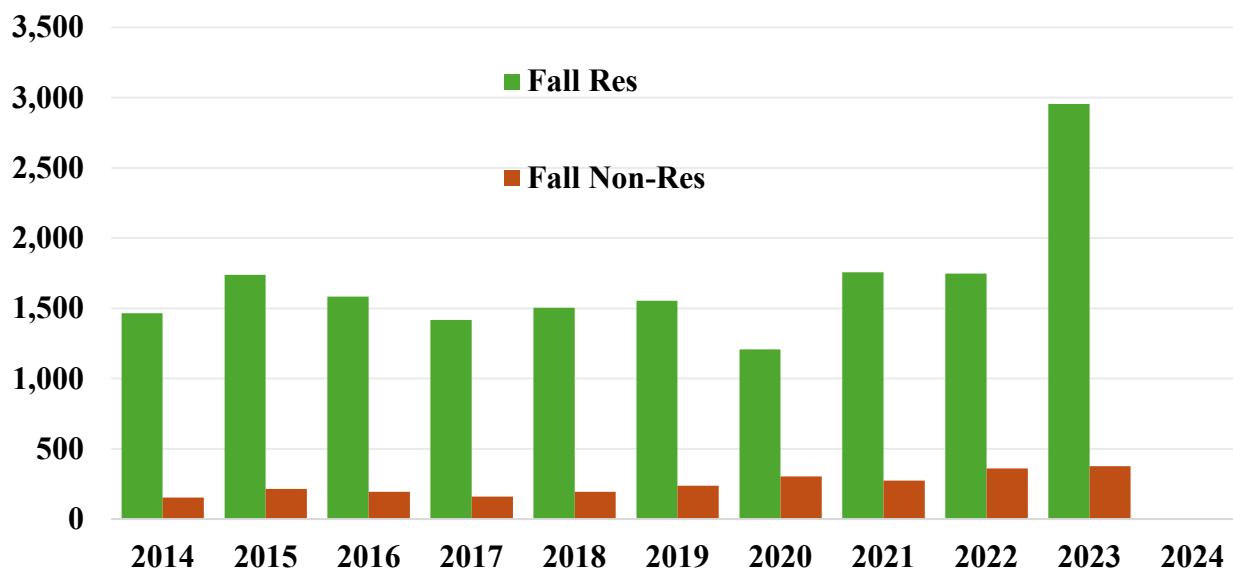


Figure 6. Fall wild turkey hunter numbers by residency 2014-2024

Over the past decade and a half, trends in fall harvest of wild turkeys have generally mirrored those of the spring (Figure 7). However, from 2020-2022 this has not been the case. Rather, total fall harvest follow a trend opposite that of the spring. Hunter numbers do tend to track bird numbers, and it may be more prudent to infer population trends taking into consideration both fall and spring harvest data since 2021. For when taken together, spring and fall harvest statistics generally paint a picture of an increasing statewide population.

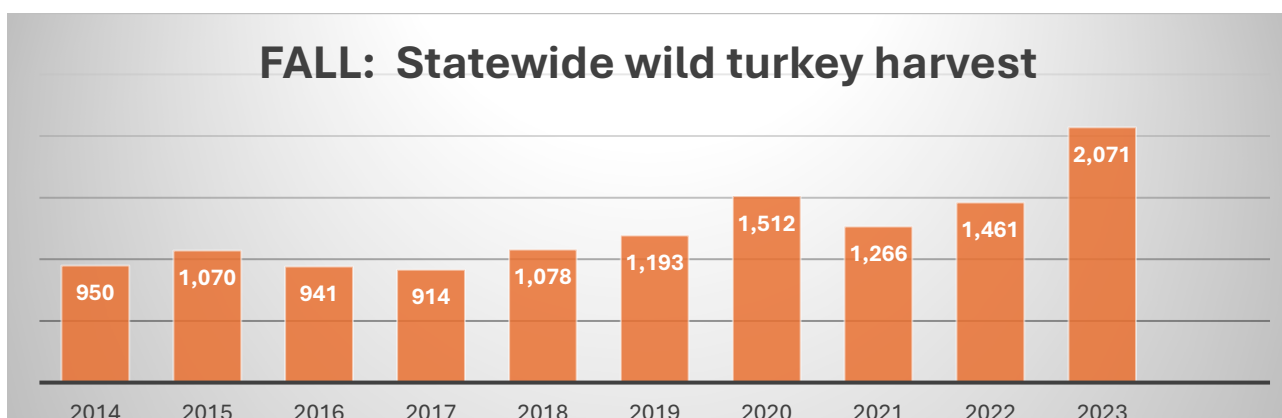


Figure 7. Total, statewide fall wild turkey harvest.

REGULATION / LEGISLATION CHANGES

To simplify wild turkey hunting regulations and group hunt areas by management strategy, the number of hunt areas was reduced from fourteen to five in 2014. Then, in 2021, the General License spring season opening date was standardized to April 20 in 4 of 5 hunt areas. With this change, spring closing dates for all hunt areas were standardized to May 31. Standardization of fall hunting season dates was made in 2023, with archery season running the month of September in 4 of 5 hunt

areas, followed by regular hunting seasons being open from Oct. 1- Dec. 31. However, in former Hunt Area 3, the regular season remained open Sept. 1 – Dec. 31. In 2024, the decision was made to move to a single, statewide hunt area for wild turkey. With this change, fall hunting season dates were standardized to Sept. 1 – 30 for archery hunting, and Oct. 1 – Dec. 31 for the regular hunting season on all license types. Further, the spring 2025 hunting season opening date for General licenses was standardized to April 20, while the Type 3 license season was opened in most counties April 1. The remaining counties were valid opening April 20. In spring of 2026, all of the Type 3 counties will open April 1. The spring closing date for all license types remains May 31.

There are three accepted management strategies for wild turkey (Healy and Powell, 2000):

- Emphasis on spring gobbler hunting only.
- Emphasis on spring gobbler hunting with limited, either sex fall hunting.
- Maximum combined spring and fall harvest to reduce population numbers and address depredation.

With the move to a single, statewide hunt area for wild turkey, the management strategy for General License hunting now emphasizes spring gobbler hunting with limited, either sex fall hunting. With regard to managing for limited either sex fall hunting under the General License framework, there has been a significant shift in hunter participation from predominately fall to predominately spring hunting over the past forty years. Consequently, fall take of hens on general licenses is now thought to be below the 10% level at which wild turkey populations can be negatively affected. However, to address damage and depredation complaints in some counties, a Type 3 license is being issued in both the fall and spring to promote maximum combined harvest to reduce wild turkey populations in those areas. With the addition of counties where the Type 3 license is valid, an increase in quota is warranted to ensure enough licenses are available to address these damage situations.

Occupied wild turkey habitat in counties where the Type 3 license is valid consist primarily of private land. Damage complaints are common when wild turkey populations high. Further, in most of these same counties, the spring season opens early for Type 3 licenses. The April 1 opening date being intended to negatively impact breeding when compared to the later, statewide opening date for General Licenses (April 20). The latter date being designed to allow some mating by dominate toms and provide dominate hens the opportunity to begin nest initiation before being hunted.

Harvest (Figures 1&2) can be a good indicator of trends in wild turkey populations. This data suggests after peaking between 2008 and 2010, wild turkey numbers declined through 2014. They then began to increase, with 2016 & 2017 overwinter and spring weather conditions substantially favoring productivity and survival. Consequently, in most areas of the state wild turkey numbers responded by increasing considerably. The 2018/2019 and 2022/2023 winters were fairly severe and was followed by a generally wet and cool spring in most locations. This resulted in reduced survival and reproductive success except in 2023. Mild winters and relatively dry spring weather in 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2024 resulted in excellent poult production and survival throughout most of the state, leading to a substantial increase in wild turkey numbers. This was followed by what has been more generally normal reproductive success and survival since 2022 across occupied wild turkey habitat. Poult production along with fall, preseason gobbler counts are conducted annually only in the Black Hills and was conducted in central Wyoming for the first time in 2024. This data (figure 3) tends to be somewhat indicative of statewide trends in wild turkey production and survival, and the

poult per brood ratio a good predictor of toms available for spring harvest. While poult production and survival was closer to normal in the Black Hills last year, in some locations wild turkey productivity and survival remained above average, further increasing wild turkey numbers to the point where nuisance turkey complaints have become common in parts of some counties. In addition to implementing a single, statewide hunt area for wild turkeys and standardization of season dates in 2024, evidence of sex can accompany the turkey carcass attached or unattached during the spring hunting season while the turkey is in transportation. To manage hunter pressure and harvest on Yellowtail Wildlife Habitat Management Area (WHMA) following the statewide hunt area consolidation, a Hunter Management Area permission slip will be required for spring turkey hunting on the WHMA starting in 2025.

EMERGING OR EVOLVING ISSUES

- The Department may again be looking into going to shotgun / archery, or limited range weapon only for the spring hunt.
- Limiting non-resident participation?

RELEVANT LINKS

Wyoming Game and Fish Dept. main website

Harvest Data: <https://wgfd.wyo.gov/hunting-trapping/harvest-reports-surveys>

Geospatial Data: <https://wgfd.wyo.gov/geospatial-data>

Hunt Planner: <https://wgfd.wyo.gov/Hunting/Hunt-Planner>

Regulations: <https://wgfd.wyo.gov/regulations>

MISCELLANEOUS

- Trap and Translocations: This winter a total of 137 wild turkeys were trapped and translocated. All of the trapped birds came from urban or suburban areas in and around Casper, were banded with rivet leg bands, and released in a variety of occupied habitats. Several of the translocated toms have been harvested by hunters this spring and fall.
- Lethal Removal: In 2024, two “Chapter 56” lethal removal permits were issued to take nuisance and depredating wild turkeys. One of the permits was issued to Department personnel and one to a municipality. Thus far in 2024, 20 wild turkeys have been taken on renewed permits.

2025 Fall and 2026 Spring Hunting Seasons

Statewide Wild Turkey

2025 Fall Season

Hunt Areas, Season Dates and Limitations.

Hunt Area	Type	Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes		
1	Gen	Sep. 1	Sep. 30		Any wild turkey, archery only

1	Gen	Oct. 1	Dec. 31		Any wild turkey
1	3	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	1000	Any wild turkey valid within Converse, Natrona, Campbell, Johnson and Sheridan Counties; valid on private land in Crook, Hot Springs and Weston Counties, archery only
1	3	Oct. 1	Dec. 31		Any wild turkey valid within Converse, Natrona, Campbell, Johnson and Sheridan Counties; valid on private land in Crook, Hot Springs and Weston Counties

2026 Spring Season Hunt Areas, Season Dates and Limitations.

Hunt Area	Type	Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes		
1	Gen	Apr. 20	May. 31		Any male wild turkey or any wild turkey with a visible beard (Hunter Management Area permission slip required to hunt on the Yellowtail Wildlife Habitat Management Area)
1	3	Apr. 1	May. 31	800	Any male wild turkey or any wild turkey with a visible beard valid within Converse, Natrona, Campbell, Johnson and Sheridan counties

National Wild Turkey Federation Reports

NWTF CENTRAL REGION CONSERVATION UPDATE - 2025

Western States Wild Turkey Technical Committee Meeting – April 7th – 9th, 2025

South Padre Island, TX

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The bulk of this report is focused on ND, NE, KS, OK, SD, & TX, in the NWTF's Central Region with a primary focus on riparian restoration, along with forest stand and grasslands improvement projects. In the Eastern portion of the region, our focus is more on forest restoration, specifically white oak, and oak savanna restoration. We will be announcing a significant new initiative in the Midwest later this Fall. We are now fully staffed in the Central Region, recently filling a vacant Forester position in Illinois with Connor Evans and the Wild Turkey Program Manager position in Nebraska with Charlie Salline. The map below details staff titles and locations.



NATIONAL UPDATES

National Convention — For those unable to attend this year, we set another attendance record with over **82,000** in attendees. We are making plans for next year's convention in Nashville, as we celebrate our 50th Convention.

District Biologist Structure — Last summer, we made structural changes allowing us to add supervision back to the District Biologist position. Through a competitive process, we selected four

staff to serve in these supervisory roles, including Annie Farrell and Ryan Boyer in the Central Region.

Federal Agency Challenges — Like some of you, we have been working through challenges with contracts and agreements with our federal partners, most notably the U.S. Forest Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Our agreements are progressing forward with some modifications and we have only experienced slight delays.

Research — The NWTF’s research RFP recently opened for the fourth consecutive year to continue our momentum funding wild turkey research. Through the RFP program we have made substantial investments, including \$362,889 in 2022 for seven projects; \$587,324 in 2023 for 10 projects; and \$655,447 for nine projects in 2024. With our partners’ contributions over the last few years, more than \$18 million has gone to wild turkey research.

Distinguished Professorship — In addition to research projects, we partnered with the University of Georgia to establish the first-ever wild turkey distinguished professorship, filled by Dr. Mike Chamberlain. We are close to eclipsing \$1 million, at which point the endowment will create a self-funding source to fund a wild turkey research position forever. We are currently working to create additional endowed professorships across the country.

National Forestry Initiative —The NFI was developed in partnership with the NRCS to help private forest landowners across the country steward their forested lands. Working out of NRCS field offices, 31 foresters in 24 states deliver technical and financial assistance through Farm Bill conservation programs administered by NRCS on private lands. Currently, there is NFI forester in the Central Region located in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Policy Overview (National) — The NWTF engages in State and Federal conservation policy, when appropriate and when policy potentially impacts our mission directly. District Biologists continue to serve as policy leads in their states, working with Conservation leadership, and our National Policy Team to evaluate and engage accordingly with key legislation. At the Federal level, we also engage in mission-centric legislation pursuant to habitat conservation and promoting and supporting hunting and outdoor recreation. Of special focus is forest restoration, including addressing the “Cottonwood” decision, addressing the wildfire risk, and funding for conservation and hunter access.

- Farm Bill — We continue to work with our partners to guide decision makers in Congress as they craft a new Farm Bill for the next five years. NWTF Farm Bill priorities haven’t changed from the previous Congress, and we remain optimistic but know a new Farm Bill is unlikely this year, as Congress deals with budget reconciliation.
- Voluntary Public Access Improvement Act — NWTF has been supportive of continued financial investments into this successful program, including this VPA-HIP marker bill.
- Fix Our Forests Act — (H.R. 8790), bill to enhance forest management and restoration practices on public, tribal and national forest lands, to address the growing risks of wildfires and the need for accelerated forest restoration.

- Public Land Disposal/Sale— NWTF policy staff are closely monitoring recent buzz around the possible sale or disposal of public lands, much of it spurred by the Utah lawsuit.

CONSERVATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS (BY STATE)

Below are FY2024 accomplishments for the WAFWA states encompassed in the NWTF's Central Region. In total, **153,575 acres** were conserved/enhanced across these six states.

State	Conserved/Enhanced Acres	State	Conserved/Enhanced Acres
Kansas	28,576	Oklahoma	100,921
Nebraska	5,357	South Dakota	7,132
North Dakota	3,132	Texas	8,457

HUNTING HERITAGE SUPER FUND PROJECTS

The Super Fund remains an integral funding source for much of the conservation and hunting heritage delivery efforts in the Central Region. Below are allocations from each respective state's Super Fund for 2025. In total, the NWTF provided **\$459,604 in Super Funds**, which was matched with **\$38,400,000 from partners!**

Kansas — **\$87,730** was allocated towards the mission, matched with more than **\$400K** from partners. Awards included **\$28,730** to support education/outreach including NWTF Outreach programs, JAKES, 4H Shooting Sports, and NASP. An additional **\$59,000** was directed to conservation efforts including projects on KDWP (Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks) Wildlife Areas, equipment purchases to enable habitat work such as prescribed burning and tree planting, NWTF's Waterways for Wildlife Initiative and wild turkey research.

Nebraska — **\$35,123** was allocated towards the mission. Awards included **\$22,873** in support of education/outreach efforts including NWTF Outreach programs, 4H, NASP, other shooting sports programs. An additional **\$12,250** was directed to conservation efforts for NWTF's Waterways for Wildlife Initiative and nesting and brooding habitat project on Bassway Strip Wildlife Management Area.

North Dakota — **\$48,000** was allocated for mission related activities matched with **\$1.1M** from our partners. Awards included **\$17,000** to support hunting heritage events and programs and **\$31,000** for conservation efforts like the Waterways for Wildlife Initiative, tree/shrub planting, and invasive species removal in western, ND.

Oklahoma — **\$68,691** was allocated towards the mission, matched with **\$700k** from partners. Awards included **\$29,966** approved to support JAKES, scholarships, WITO, Wheelin' Sportsmen,

R3 support, NASP, and the Scholastic Shooting Sports Program and **\$38,725** directed to conservation efforts, including projects on ODWC WMAs (Wildlife Management Areas) and Waterways for Wildlife

South Dakota — **\$81,700** was allocated for mission related activities matched with over **\$21M** from our partners. Awards included **\$37,575** in support of the SD Wildlife Federation’s youth camp, hunter education classroom improvements, and youth events and **\$44,125** to conservation efforts including the Waterways for Wildlife Initiative, support of the Black Hills Forester position, a virtual fencing project with the USFS, among others.

Texas — **\$155,066** was allocated towards the mission, matched with **\$954k** from partners. Awards included **\$77,841** to support NWTF Outreach programs, 4H Shooting Sports, NASP, Texas Youth Hunting Program/Adult Learn to Hunt Program, etc. and **\$77,225** for conservation efforts including habitat and equipment projects with partners such as TPWD (Texas Parks and Wildlife Department), Texas A&M Forest Service and the East Texas Prescribed Burn Association, wild turkey research at Texas Tech University and NWTF’s Waterways for Wildlife Initiative.

CONSERVATION DELIVERY, AGENCY PARTNERSHIPS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

Kansas

NWTF Regional staff continue to serve in key partnership roles with state agencies and conservation partners, providing insights, regional perspectives and support. Several of these roles are detailed below:

- KDWP Wild Turkey Management Committee
- Kansas Forest Service Advisory Board
- Kansans for Conservation Coalition (effort to establish a sustainable funding source for conservation delivery). NWTF Staff Annie Farrell, Jared McJunkin and Regional Director, Nate Watson participated in the Kansans for Conservation Coalition’s Day at the Capitol

Nebraska

- Nebraska Conservation Roundtable — NWTF staff serve on sustainable funding subcommittee and E. red cedar committee
- Wild Turkey Program Manager — We partnered with NGPC to establish and host the first of its kind position
- Nebraska Staff Growth — Several new NWTF staff including Wild Turkey Program Manager, National Forestry Initiative Forester, and Hunting and Shooting R3 Coordinator

North Dakota

- Turkey Tag Auction — NDNWTF received three highly coveted non-resident spring turkey tags from NDGF and auctioned them during the 2025 NWTF National Convention raising \$5,527.50 to be used on conservation in the state.

- Outdoor Heritage Funding — We completed two riparian and grazing infrastructure improvement projects right before winter allowing us to exceed our acreage goal for the grant by over 1,200 acres.
- North Dakota Prescribed Fire Cooperative — NWTF recently joined this cooperative led by the Pheasants Forever Prescribed Fire Coordinator.

Oklahoma

- Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation — Several large-scale riparian and invasive species removal projects on WMAs via the Super Fund including Canton WMA, Cherokee WMA, Waurika, WMA and Okmulgee GMA
- Riparian Restoration — Since 2022, the NWTF and partners statewide have conserved 2,919 acres of riparian habitat through the Waterways for Wildlife Initiative with projects focusing on removing invasive species such as eastern red cedar, salt cedar and Russian olive.

South Dakota

- Black Hills National Forest — Currently working with the USFS through the W4W Initiative as well as a virtual fencing project that is taking place in the northern Black Hills of SD. SD Super Funds were used to purchase a mobile base tower to assist with weak signal problems due to the terrain.
- South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks — NWTF assisted with purchase of turkey trapping equipment, provided funding for habitat enhancement projects, as well as provided funding for the Turkey CHAP (controlled hunting access program)
- Black Hills Area Watershed Coalition — This group recently formed out of the need for a targeted and collaborative approach at protecting and enhancing watersheds in the Black Hills. NWTF will play an important role within this group.
- Pheasants Forever — SDNWTF has provided funding towards PF's "Leave a Legacy" program in SD where our funds offset the cost of trees for private landowners.

Texas

- NETX CDN Habitat Incentive Program — NWTF and TPWD work cooperatively with the Northeast Texas Conservation Delivery Network (LMVJV) to conserve and enhance habitat on private lands through the Habitat Incentive Program. Since inception in 2017, NWTF and partners have delivered over \$1.5M on the ground in cost-share assistance, impacting over 30,000 acres of private lands in Eastern wild turkey restoration areas.
- Upland Game Bird Advisory Committee — NWTF District Biologist was added to TPWD's Upland Game Bird Advisory Committee, a seat previously held by the NWTF-Texas State Chapter President. The committee recently brought forth recommendations for wild turkey regulation changes including closing parts of several counties, adjusting bag limits for certain areas, and removing subspecies designations from regulations.
- NWTF Regional staff continue to serve in key partnership roles with state agencies and conservation partners, providing insights, regional perspectives and support. Several of these roles are detailed below:

- USDA NRCS's State Technical Advisory Committee and Wildlife Subcommittee
- NWTF staff serve on the Texas Longleaf Team steering committee and the project review working group.
- Continued assistance to TPWD in coordination of Eastern Wild Turkey Super Stocking efforts

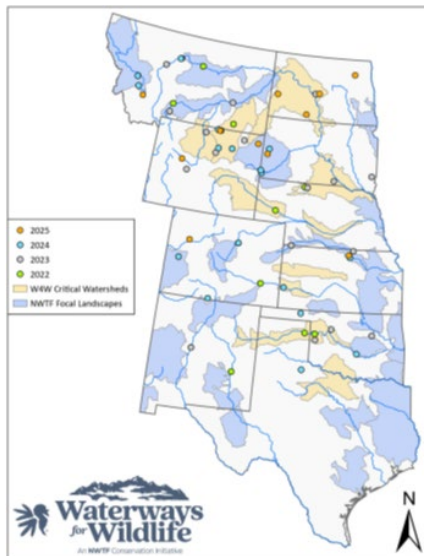
U. S. Forest Service (FS)

- **Region 1** — We are working with the FS on Rocky Mountain Juniper removal on the McKenzie and Wannagan units of the Dakota Prairie Grassland.
- **Region 2** — We are working with the FS on several projects in the northern and southern portions of the Black Hills National Forest and pursuing additional projects to deliver FS funding on the NF.
- **Region 8** — We are currently investigating opportunities to assist the FS in the delivery of significant disaster recovery funding in the Southeast U.S., including the Sam Houston National Forest here in Texas.

Joint Ventures

NWTF regional staff continue to serve on management boards for Joint Ventures across the region, including the Playa Lakes Joint Venture (McJunkin), Northern Great Plains Joint Venture (Lenk) and the Oaks and Prairies Joint Venture (Farrell)

WATERWAYS FOR WILDLIFE INITIATIVE



The W4W initiative remains a focus for staff in the NWTF's Central and Western Regions. Staff recently concluded the 2025 Request for Proposals, reviewing and ranking 26 proposals for funding. 11 projects were approved providing \$122,000 in NWTF funding supporting projects across six of the ten W4W initiative states. NWTF funds were matched at a rate of almost 24:1 with more than \$2.5 million in partner funding. Projects will potentially impact more than 937 riparian acres, 5,684

adjacent upland acres and 38 stream miles across the ten-state footprint of the W4W initiative. In just four years, the W4W initiative has allocated \$729,000 in funding, matched with more than \$27 million from partners (36:1) and will improve 43,600 riparian acres and 217 stream miles.



CONSERVATION POLICY (STATE)

It has been an active policy year in many of our states, with recurring challenges related to firearms and the second amendment, structure and oversight of State Fish & Game Commissions, and threats to conservation funding. Below is a summary of key policy items we have engaged in, over the past 12 months, or are engaged in currently, in the Central Region's six WAFWA states:

- **Kansas (SB211)** – NWTF opposes Bill which would allow KDWP Commissioners to propose regulation changes to the Commission. Bill was amended to lessen concern and passed out of committee.
- **Kansas (HB2063)** – NWTF supported the Kansans For Conservation Coalition effort to establish a sustainable conservation fund, will not be worked this session, carries over to 2026
- **Texas (HB4938)** – NWTF opposed this bill introduced to abolish the TPWD and spread out their duties and authorities to other state agencies. Bill was dropped by sponsor after backlash.

WILD TURKEY RESEARCH

NWTF continues to work with our state agency partners in the region in support of wild turkey research. A list of current projects in the six WAFWA states in the Central Region are listed below, some supported with Super Funds

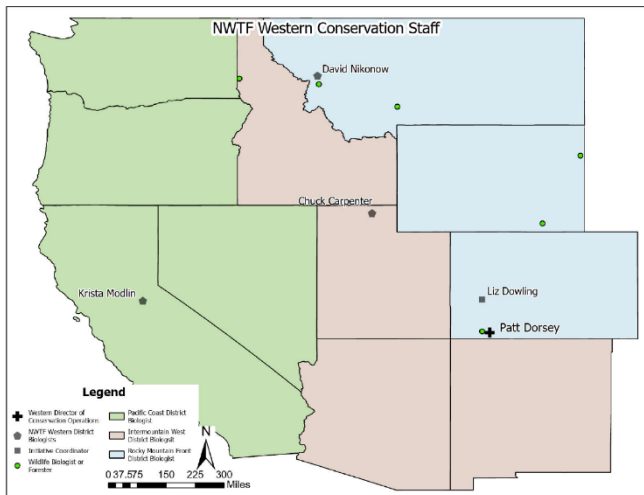
- **Kansas:** Kansas State University – Wild Turkey Poults Foraging Ecology and Nutrient Availability
- **Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas:** lead by Texas Tech University (including contributions from 7+ universities) - A Distribution Level Health Assessment of Rio Grande Wild Turkeys.
- **Nebraska:** University of Nebraska-Lincoln - Evaluating the Spatial Distribution of Potential Wild Turkey Nest Predators in Western Nebraska.
- **North Dakota:** University of North Dakota – Estimating Survival and Productivity of Translocated Turkeys.
- **Oklahoma:** Oklahoma State University - Wild Turkey Population Ecology and Disease Monitoring
- **Texas:** Texas A&M University – Impacts of Woody Understory Vegetation and Invasive Species on Roosting Habitat Potential for Wild Turkey
- **Texas:** Texas Tech University – Rio Grande Wild Turkey Habitat and Genetic Connectivity, Disease Prevalence and Survival in the Texas Edwards Plateau Ecoregion
- **South Dakota:** West Virginia University – Vital Rates and Population Growth of Merriam's Turkeys in South-Central South Dakota

NWTF WEST REGION CONSERVATION UPDATE - 2025
Western States Wild Turkey Technical Committee Meeting – April 7th – 9th, 2025
South Padre Island, TX

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Conservation Delivery, Agency Partnerships and Other Activities:

Arizona:

- General Springs has been divided into two phases. Phase One has already been awarded, and work is set to begin any day now. Phase Two is expected to go out to bid in mid-summer, with work scheduled to begin once the MSO closure is lifted.
- The General Springs stewardship is roughly a 3,500-acre stewardship project located on the Mogollon Rim in the Coconino National Forest.

California

- California wildfires continue to be a constant threat to conservation and habitat management. California has lost millions of acres of habitat for wildlife over the last few years due to severe wildfires. NWTF continues to implement important fuels reduction in strategic areas to provide defense against future wildfires. The NWTF is working with multiple partners to implement two stewardship projects: the Cleveland-Icehouse project on the Eldorado National Forest and the Knopki (pronounced ka-nop-kee) project on the Six Rivers National Forest. Both projects focus on fuels reduction, habitat enhancement, fire prevention and post fire restoration. Unfortunately, these projects have been impacted by wildfires the last 2 summers.
- The NWTF hopes to begin implementing the Knopki Stewardship Project on the Six Rivers this year. The NWTF received a \$835,000 grant from the California Wildlife Conservation Board to implement oak woodland restoration, beargrass rejuvenation, and plantation thinning.
- California Superfund Highlights:
 - \$12,000 from Superfund went to purchase equipment to support a 10-year wild turkey banding program with California DFW
 - \$25,000 went to support a land acquisition project in El Dorado County with the American River Conservancy. This will become the first public wildlife area in this county.
 - \$2,000 went to purchase prescribed burn equipment for the Placer County Conservation District.

Colorado

- The timber work on the Hubbard stewardship on the Grand Mesa-Uncompahgre National Forest (GMUG) is complete. We are currently under contract with engineers to complete several recreational components of the agreement. Additionally, we continue to plan out work for reforestation planting, archeology surveys, and mastication.
- After recent field surveys and re-evaluation, USFS partners have determined that there is no value in the material within the Buffalo Forks agreement. Furthermore, any harvest treatments would likely have negative impacts on natural forest regeneration. It has been recommended to close out this agreement.
- Colorado Super Fund Highlights:
 - \$15,000 allocated towards the Waterways for Wildlife Initiative
 - \$1,500 allocated towards sponsorships at a Legislative Reception and Sportsmans Day at the Captial.

Idaho

- Idaho received three grants from the Idaho Commissioner's Community Challenge Grant Program: \$1,000 for the Southeast Region, \$500 for the Magic Valley Region, and, for the first time, \$8,000 from the State-Wide grant.
- The Deer Point Forest Stewardship Project has been funded to begin work on 1,268 acres located approximately 10 miles north of Boise. Work is scheduled to begin on May 1st. The project is focused on improving overall forest health and reducing wildfire risk in an area that experiences high public use due to nearby recreational attractions, including the Bogus Basin Ski Resort and Stack Rock Mountain bike trails.
- Idaho has planted over 1,000 trees and shrubs and rehabilitated 300 15' trees across multiple wildlife management areas this year. Additionally, Idaho has funded the following:
 - \$5,000.00 for Scholastic 3-D archery targets for youth archery in Idaho.
 - \$9,462.00 for the purchase of 365 Groasis™ tree water boxes from Trees Please, to be used and distributed for habitat work throughout Idaho.
 - \$1,950.00 for two projects that will open 10 acres of property to recreationalists along the Snake River, which includes materials for invasive species removal and an information kiosk.
 - \$10,000.00 allocated for Boise WMA fire rehabilitation project.

Montana

- The NWTF is assisting the Bitterroot NF with efforts to mitigate potential impacts from catastrophic wildfire and to improve wildlife habitat. In 2023, NWTF administered the first phase of the Stevensville West Central Fuels Reduction Project totaling 1,758 acres and completed the remaining 550 acres in Phase 2 in the 2024 field season. This agreement is still open as we explore how to complete more acres of treatment remaining funds.
- The NWTF continues its partnership with the USFS and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program to collaboratively fund the NWTF Western Montana Cooperative Biologist position. The position was filled by Bridger Line in January

of 2025 after a 12-month vacancy. Through the provision of the biologists' technical assistance in the design stage of project development, forest management projects primarily targeting fuels reduction are more effectively able to enhance and increase habitat diversity for wild turkeys, forest grouse and other wildlife.

- NWTF District Biologist, David Nikonow still serves on the Montana Forest Action Council and Forest Legacy subcommittee to help represent Conservation organizations interest in forest management and land protection through conservation easements.
- Montana Super Fund Highlights:
 - \$15,000 allocated to the Waterways for Wildlife Initiative
 - The NWTF State Board is currently reviewing three additional Super Fund proposals

New Mexico

- The Zuni Mountain Stewardship Project continues to thrive, with 1,000 acres completed so far this year, following a strong showing last year with 1,785 acres treated.
 - During the previous season, 250 loads of wood were allocated to the Navajo Wood for Life program, benefiting the Standing Rock and Rock Springs Chapters, as well as the wood banks at Nahata Dzill and Rama Chapters. This impactful initiative has received well-deserved attention, having been featured in several publications, including the *New Mexico Tree Farm Bulletin* and NWTF articles.
 - In continued support of the project, the Forest Service has invested an additional \$860,000 to bolster ongoing efforts. Notable infrastructure improvements have also been completed, including the repair of an unsanctioned culvert previously installed by a local homeowner's association.
 - The project is moving forward successfully, and we're proud to have reached this latest milestone in collaboration, restoration, and community benefit.
- Working with the Pueblos to provide turkey feathers.
 - <https://magazine.wildlife.state.nm.us/dca-archeologist-weaves-a-blanket-made-of-17000-turkey-feathers/>
 - <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/800-year-old-blanket-holds-clues-turkey-farming-american-southwest-180976438/>

Oregon

- Stewardship projects in Oregon focus on important aspen stand restoration, as well as forest thinning to promote abundance of late and old structure forests.
- The aspen stand restoration projects are important for wildlife conservation as they provide high value cover, food, habitat, and water. Aspen habitats are among the most biodiverse habitats in the West and there is evidence that healthy aspen communities facilitate water conservation. The NWTF is planning to begin a new aspen restoration project, the Damon project, on the Malheur National Forest, this year that will improve about 400 acres of aspen stands that have been encroached upon by conifer species.

- In 2024, the NWTF began the Sunflower Restoration Project on the Ochoco National Forest that focused on removing invasive juniper to enhance native sagebrush and bitterbrush habitat. A total of about 200 acres was completed. This project location was chosen partially because it is the location of successful turkey releases in the early 2000s.
- The NWTF is working on a new agreement on the Umpqua National Forest that focuses on post fire restoration to enhance willow habitat, oak woodlands and replanting after a large wildlife occurred last year.
- Oregon Superfund Highlights:
 - o \$1,034 was donated to Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to sponsor 2 pheasants hunts on the EE Wilson Wildlife Area: 1 youth hunt, and 1 Hunters of Color event.
 - o \$1,400 supported ODFW's Hunt by Reservation Program

Utah

- Utah has reached a major milestone this year, contributing \$233,604.30 to 22 projects through the state's Watershed Restoration Initiative (WRI). In addition, the funding is helping support a Southern Region Habitat Specialist, two nuisance turkey trapping positions, and two sage-grouse biologist positions.
- The Upper Provo Watershed Restoration Phase 8 (WRI 6515) has treated a total of 3,442 acres to date across thinning, mastication, and restoration efforts. Forest Fitness completed 1,268 acres, and GE Forestry finished 1,502 acres, while England Construction completed 672 acres out of a planned 1,003. The remaining work was put on hold due to fire-related access restrictions and winter weather but is expected to resume once conditions allow.
- The Utah State Chapter purchased a burn trailer for Forestry, Fire, and State Lands that will be utilized by multiple agencies for prescribed fires. It has been used on three forests and has already been used for prescribed fire on 3,500 acres this spring.

Washington

- The NWTF continued our partnership with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) using turkey tag funding to implement habitat projects. After a successful request for proposals, we were able to award funding for 2 habitat projects in Washington, for a total of \$80,000.
- The Wind River project on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest was selected for funding to complete Phase 3. This phase will include noxious weed removal and planting native trees and shrubs.
- The Upper Wenatchee Forest Resilience Project was selected and will mechanically thin about 20 acres of habitat. This project is being implemented with state, federal and county partners.
- Washington Superfund Highlights
 - o \$500 to host a Jakes outreach and hunting clinic

Wyoming

- Riparian restoration and forest management have always been and continue to be an NWTF conservation focus on Wyoming due to the nature of these ecotypes' importance to wild turkeys and other wildlife on a statewide scale. Wyoming partners have continued to develop and implement riparian projects that NWTF supports, most recently through the NWTF's Waterways for Wildlife Initiative.
- Pursuing Master Participating Agreement to assist Thunder Basin NG with the Weston Hills Riparian Restoration project.
- Wyoming Super Fund Highlights:
 - o \$3,000 allocated to Wyoming Access YES program improving access to approximately 6,000 acres of hunting.
 - o \$3,000 allocated to Wyoming Game and Fish for a turkey trap. Since being purchased, the trap has already been used to capture and move over 120 nuisance birds from Casper, WY. WY NWTF volunteers have also helped with trapping efforts.
 - o \$3,000 allocated to support the Annual NWTF Veterans' Turkey Hunt in Newcastle WY.

Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative

Due to over 100 years of fire suppression, severe drought, disease and insect pests, many of Colorado's forests are in poor condition, making them susceptible to extreme wildfires. The Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative was co-convened by the NWTF and the USDA Forest Service in 2019 with the goal of increasing the pace and scale of forest restoration in Colorado to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire, enhance wildlife habitat, and protect water sources and infrastructure, communities, and recreational opportunities.

RMRI began as a national pilot under the USDA's Shared Stewardship Strategy and includes a diverse community of 170 individuals and over 60+ partner organizations in the public and private sectors. Four shared values guide the work of RMRI: Healthy Forests and Wildlife Habitat; Clean Water; Wildfire Resilient Communities and Sustainable Recreation. The work of RMRI partners is in three priority landscapes (Southwest Colorado, Upper Arkansas and Upper South Platte). Subcommittees are focused on removing barriers to getting to pace and scale on three cross-cutting issues: Social License/Communications, Workforce Capacity and Biomass Utilization.

Through this initiative, the NWTF is achieving its goals of enhancing habitat for turkeys and other wildlife, by reducing uncharacteristic wildfire risk and burn severity, while meeting the goals of our partners: improving forest and wildlife habitat, preparing communities for fire, protecting watersheds, and sustaining accessible recreation. Our accomplishments show the diverse work throughout the landscape. For example, hazardous fuels reduction work, stream restoration work, education and outreach events, partners adding capacity, and hosting landscape field tours. This partner driven collaborative has increased cross-boundary work and been an exemplary pilot of Shared Stewardship. Learn more at www.restoringtherockies.org.

Waterways 4 Wildlife (W4W) Initiative (West Region Projects)

NWTF recently announced the Waterways for Wildlife Initiative, a broader riparian initiative encompassing 10 states and targeting more non-traditional partners. The goals for the initiative are to conserve/enhance 75,000 acres over the next 10-years and 50+ million in funding to accomplish the work. The following NWTF Western Region projects were approved for support.

The following is a synopsis of West Region projects that were funded in 2024 and 2025:

Funding 2024	Funding 2025
Arkansas River Restoration (CO/KS) - This project is in cooperation with Ducks Unlimited, Kansas Alliance for Wetlands and Streams, Mule Deer Foundation, and Kansas Department of Agriculture and seeks to restore 1,176 acres of riparian habitat along 25 stream miles of the Arkansas River in western Kansas and eastern Colorado through removal of invasive species such as Salt Cedar, Russian Olive, and Eastern red cedar.	Bearlodge Riparian Restoration Project (WY) - This project seeks to restore riparian health across 3 watersheds (Whitelaw Creek, Blacktail Creek, Beaver Creek) and 271 acres in the Bearlodge Mountains. All funding will go to on-the-ground efforts to promote riparian restoration with the ultimate goal of repopulation of beavers to maintain these ecosystems. Project work will include installation of LTPBR structures (BDA's/PALS, etc.), aspen restoration, meadow restoration, livestock management, noxious weed control, and riparian vegetation planting.
Escalante Ranch: Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area (CO) - This project is in cooperation with The Conservation Fund, Bureau of Land Management the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. They're working to acquire and ultimately convey to the BLM, the 4,061-acre Escalante Ranch within the BLM's Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area which is a large conservation and riparian project that will support key wild turkey habitat in western Colorado.	Upper Moose Creek BDA Project (MT) - The proposed action would be to utilize partners and FS staff to construct several beaver dam analog structures in this upper watershed where historic beaver activity was present to reestablish properly functioning stream conditions that have been degraded by loss of beavers and grazing impacts. USFS would also build a starter lodge and food cache to aid in the relocation of problem beavers from nearby areas in coordination with Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks. Treatments will improve 132 acres.
Fifer Gulch Stream Restoration Project (MT) - This project is in cooperation with the George Grant Trout Unlimited and Montana Trout Unlimited and intends to restore the currently ditched and incised lower Fifer Gulch channel will be restored to a sinuous channel with a focus on the restoration of connectivity between the channel and adjacent floodplain on 5 acres and .2 stream miles.	Sheridan Community Land Trust - Improving habitat on the Buyok Conservation Easement (WY) - This project will construct Zeedyk structures and BDAs on 17 riparian acres. The structures are designed to initiate restoration of natural processes, but additional interventions are often necessary to slowly build incised channels back up to desired floodplain levels. As structures fill with sediment and vegetation, it may be desirable to plan a new project with additional structures on top of or near existing structures to further raise the water table

	and expand riparian and wet meadow areas.
Conejos River Restoration Project (CO) - This project is in cooperation with the Colorado Rio Grande Restoration Foundation, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies and many others addressing streambank stabilization, floodplain reconnection, channel morphology reconstruction, backwater and wetland restoration, and irrigation infrastructure replacement on 2.5 acres and 1 stream mile.	West Rifle Creek State Wildlife Area Wetland Restoration and Assessment (CO) - This project combines wetland restoration with water infrastructure planning for 36 riparian acres of the West Rifle Creek State Wildlife Area managed by Colorado Parks and Wildlife. This proposal will 1) implement targeted beaver mimicry wetland restoration treatments along West Rifle Creek and assess restoration opportunities along Middle Rifle Creek and 2) Assess water management infrastructure and support engineered design planning for future repair and modernization.
Middle Fork Crazy Woman/Poison Creek BDAs (WY) - Like many of the riparian areas in the southern Bighorn Mountains, this stream exhibits channelization, loss of deciduous riparian woody species, and a disconnected floodplain. Partnering with Wyoming game and Fish, this project will plan to install a total of 26 beaver dam analogs (BDA) on .75 miles on the Middle Fork Crazy Woman Creek and 10 on .25 miles of Poison Creek.	Wind River Indian Reservation Crow Creek Restoration Project (WY) - This project will restore a riparian ecosystem that has been severely degraded due to impacts from overgrazing by cattle and a channel re-alignment. The creek will be moved back to its original channel and LTPBR practices will be used to improve riparian habitat. Traditional Ecological Knowledge will be used to guide revegetation efforts at the site. We will rely on tribal volunteers (Elders, youth, and others) for assistance with building LTPBR structures and the revegetation efforts. In collaboration with the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, EPA, and Conservation Alliance, this project will treat 72 riparian acres.
Cold Creek Riparian Improvement (WY) - This project is in cooperation with Wyoming Game and Fish and seeks to restore 100 acres across 1.4 stream miles through the construction of beaver dam analogs and planting of trees and shrubs. Treatments will reduce erosion and sedimentation while maintaining water on the landscape longer throughout the year.	

Flint Creek Riparian Restoration - Phase 3 (MT) - The Phase 3 Flint Creek Riparian Habitat Restoration Project is part of a long term, multi-phased effort by Trout Unlimited, state agencies, and other partners to benefit and improve multiple fish and wildlife populations. The project will implement active revegetation, a grazing management plan and streambank restoration on approximately 5,000 feet of eroded stream channels.	
Six Mile Creek Wet Meadow Enhancement (WY) - This project is in cooperation with Sheridan Community Land Trust, Wyoming Game and Fish, The Nature Conservancy, and Sheridan County Conservation District. It will restore a series of wet meadows along Six Mile Creek through the construction of 50 Zeedyk structures on 1.25 stream miles impacting 104 acres.	
Rocky Mtn. Arsenal NWR - First Creek Restoration (CO) - This project is in cooperation with the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge, American Conservation Experience and CO Dept of Public Health & Environment. The project will use a tractor with a seed driller attachment to plant a sandyland prairie mix across the 60 acres of the burn site in the Spring of 2024 before vegetation begins to gro. Additionally, shrubs and cottonwood trees will be planted enhancing .5 stream miles and 25 acres.	
Northwest Energy - MO River Restoration (MT) - This project is in cooperation with NorthWestern Energy and Upper Missouri Breaks Audubon. Partners will plant 200 cottonwood trees, install an 8-foot-tall wire mesh fence, install well and irrigation lines with drips to restore	

cottonwood regeneration along 6.5 acres and .27 miles of the Missouri river.	
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National Forestry Initiative (NFI)

Through a national partnership agreement, NRCS and NWTF are working together to foster greater stewardship of our natural resources by helping private forest landowners in a variety of areas across the country. The NFI program began in the early summer of 2019. The current NFI 2.0 agreement continues through September 2027 with the anticipation that the partnership will continue. Working out of NRCS field offices, 31 foresters in 23 states deliver technical and financial assistance through Farm Bill conservation programs administered by NRCS on private lands. These foresters provide additional support for NRCS staff in developing forest management plans and advising landowners on best management practices that benefit forest and wildlife resources.

Below are accomplishments to date for NFI 2.0 beginning in 2023 (conserved and influenced acres combined).

National Forestry Initiative (WAFWA States)	Acres (conserved and influenced acres)
Idaho (placed in Moscow)	1,412
Montana (placed in Bozeman)	6,760
Wyoming (placed in Newcastle and Laramie)	2,134
Colorado (2 positions placed in Durango)	925
National Accomplishments	144,116

Conservation Policy – Supported key policy/legislative issues

Legislative and regulatory policy decisions can have a huge impact on wildlife populations, wildlife management and hunting heritage. **In 2024**, West Region staff monitored or directly engaged with bills across the western states. Across the West, we continue to see firearms legislation affecting hunting and wildlife management that is not favorable to the NWTF’s mission or fundraising efforts. Wildlife Conservation or Sportsmen’s Coalitions are continuing to grow and become more effective. NWTF currently participates in coalitions in CA, CO, NV, OR, WY, MT and WA. In Colorado it is relatively easy to drive citizen petitions to the ballot. This year, NWTF joined the Colorado Wildlife Conservation Project, Coloradans for Responsible Wildlife Management and Colorado’s Wildlife Deserve Better, to defeat Proposition 127, a ballot initiative to ban “trophy hunting” of mountain lion, bobcat, and lynx. The definition of trophy hunting in the language being especially problematic. Land designations, specifically national monuments, were also an area of engagement for our State Chapters.

In 2025, we are continuing to watch firearms legislation and commission reform bills in several western states. As a member organization of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, Tom Spezze, NWTF's National Director of Conservation and State Policy was part of a panel discussion on commission reform at the National Association of Sportsmen's Caucuses. Public lands are essential to our outdoor lifestyle, and we are opposed to the loss of the critical habitats and hunting access those lands provide.

Arizona

- HB 2552 – (NWTF oppose, monitor) Takes away the commission's authority to regulate the use of dogs for hunting/taking wildlife
- HB 2588 – (Monitor – failed) Would have allowed additional landowner permits for more species.
- HB 2621 – (Monitor) licensed firearm dealer sales and transfers, including background checks, exceptions, and classifications.
- HB 2603 – (Monitor) Allows the state to deny a hunting license until a person has paid a civil penalty in full or completed deferred prosecution.
- HB 2135 – (Monitor) Makes it unlawful to camp within one-fourth mile of a natural or man-made water source if it denies wildlife or livestock access.
- HB 2083 – (Monitor) Changes Commission composition to ensure that at least one member is a cattleman or rancher.
- SB 1278 – (Monitor) Establishes a committee to create a new Department of Natural Resources, which would oversee state lands and facilitate large-scale transfers of OP federal public lands to state control.
- SB 1068 – (Monitor) Requires state government consent for any federal land acquisitions within Arizona.
- Senate Concurrent Resolution 1018 – (Monitor) Supports the disposal of federally held lands by the Bureau of Land Management and opposes the federal 30x30 initiative.

California

- SB 53 - (Oppose) Prohibits firearm possession in the home unless the firearm is stored in a firearm safety device approved by the DOJ.
- AB 1507 - (Support) Exempts events hosted by a youth sport shooting organization, a youth hunting organization, or a nonprofit conservation organization from prohibitions in existing law which ban the sale of any firearm, firearm part, or ammunition on state-owned property.
- SB 772 - (Support) Raising the maximum age to purchase a junior hunting license from 15 years of age to 17 years of age.

Colorado

- SB 25-049 - (Support, sign on letter) Habitat Stamp – renewal without sunset
- SB 25-007 - (Support, NWTF letter) Increased Rx burning: creates Rx fire claims cash fund, certified burner program, etc.
- HB 25-1292 - (Support, sign on letter) Transmission lines in State Highway Rights-of-Way

- HB25-1258 – (Oppose, sign on letter, 2 volunteers testified at House Ag, Water and NR Committee, staff testified independently) - CO Wildlife Commission – use best available science, removes “shall use” hunting as the primary tool and replace with “may use.”
- HB 25-1078 - (Support, NWTF letter) Forestry & Firefighter Workforce & Education
- HB 25 1303 - (Support, sign on letter) funding for wildlife crossings

Montana

- SB 307 – (Support, sign on letter) Reallocate Montana marijuana tax revenue
- HB 84 - (Support, NWTF letter) Certified prescribed fire manager program and liability standards
- HB 139 (Oppose, sign on letter) Revise laws related to mule deer buck hunting in November.

New Mexico

- SB 5, signed into law in 2025, restructures wildlife governance in New Mexico by renaming the Game Commission and Department of Game and Fish to reflect a broader conservation mission and creating a new nominating committee to ensure a more transparent commission appointment process. It also increases hunting and fishing license fees for the first time in over 20 years—introducing a \$200 nonresident shed hunting license and setting up inflation-based adjustments starting in 2027. The bill expands authority to manage non-game species of greatest conservation need and requires annual reporting on conservation efforts, marking a significant step toward sustainable wildlife management and funding.

Oregon

- Initiative Petition 28 - (was previously IP 3) - (Strongly Oppose) This legislation would eliminate all hunting, fishing, and trapping in the state of Oregon.

Utah

- HB 202 - (Monitor Urged members to reach out individually.) Primary concerns center around Limited Entry Elk tags being allocated to private landowners, conflicts with the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation and contributes to the commodification of public wildlife resources.
- HB 244 - (Monitor). Creation of the Bear River Bay Waterfowl Management area.
- HB 309 (Monitor). Requires all Wildlife Board Members to have a current hunting or combination license.
- SB 8 – (Monitor). Gives DNR the ability to increase nonresident licenses and permits.
- Utah Lawsuit – (Monitor with NWTF Legal) UT public lands lawsuit for “unappropriated” federal land

Washington

- SB 5078 - (Oppose) Imposes liability on sellers of firearms for criminal misuse of the firearm by third parties.
- SB 5232 - (Oppose) Requires a 10-day waiting period for firearm purchases and imposes training requirements for purchasers of firearms.
- SB 5675 - (Support) improving the Fish and Wildlife Commission Appointment Process, it would have established a science-based nominating committee appointed by the governor.
- SB 6190 and SB 6183 - (Support) Modify requirements of fund-raising activities of non-profit organizations.

Miscellaneous

- Colorado Forest Health Council – Director of Conservation Operations, Patt Dorsey was appointed by Governor Jared Polis to serve a second term.
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife – Partners in the Outdoors Conference, Liz Dowling serves on the planning committee
- Montana Forest Action Council and Forest Legacy subcommittee - David Nikonow serves to help represent Conservation organizations interest in forest management and land protection through conservation easements.
- Nevada Sportsman Caucus Advisory Council- Krista Modlin is part of this council that has been restarted it after years of being inactive.
- Washington Coalition Policy Committee- Krista Modlin is a member of the policy committee and helped raise awareness on a fundraising bill in WA by meeting with the Washington Indian Gambling Commission and Senators.