



SAVE THE
HABITAT.
SAVE THE
HUNT.



THE VALUE OF TURKEY HUNTING in the WEST

For turkey hunters, it is difficult to place a value on the early morning experience of hearing a gobbler fly down from his roost. Some would say it is priceless. However, for a rural economy, there is measurable value in turkey hunting. When most people think of turkey hunting and economics, they probably think of hunting license fees and the wildlife agency these fees support. License dollars certainly create jobs and support management of wild turkeys and other wildlife, but there are many other benefits that are often overlooked.

In the western states alone, hundreds of millions of dollars are spent annually by turkey hunters on hunting trips and equipment. From specialized equipment and clothing to meals, fuel and lodging, these expenditures support many local businesses and jobs. For many small communities scattered across the western states, spring turkey hunters are a vital source of revenue before summer tourism season. Not only have some communities recognized the value of spring turkey hunting, but many have embraced it (see sidebars for Colville Wild Turkey Daze & Hulett Old West Invitational Hunt).

Based on a nationwide survey¹, each turkey hunter directly spends an average \$1,233² per season on equipment and trip expenses. Estimated, direct spending by spring turkey hunters for each western state is illustrated in Table 1. On average, each dollar spent by spring turkey hunters generates about \$2.40 in economic activity¹. Considering the direct spending by turkey hunters and this multiplier effect, it becomes easy to understand why it is important to maintain healthy turkey populations and the recreation they support.

STATE	YEAR	#HUNTERS	SPRG	EXPENDITURE*
AZ	2015	5,185		\$ 6,395,853
CA	2015	29,884		\$ 36,862,811
CO	2016	16,484		\$ 20,333,509
ID	2016	11,651		\$ 14,371,858
KS	2015	45,000		\$ 55,508,850
MT	2013	5,748		\$ 7,090,330
NE	2015	27,251		\$ 33,614,926
NV	2015	102		\$ 125,820
NM	2015	9,123		\$ 11,248,659
ND	2014	5,660		\$ 6,981,780
OK	2014	45,046		\$ 55,565,592
OR	2016	13,716		\$ 16,919,097
SD	2014	17,392		\$ 21,453,554
TX	2015	51,800		\$ 63,896,854
UT	2014	9,395		\$ 11,589,014
WA	2013	11,771		\$ 14,519,882
WY	2016	4,138		\$ 5,104,347
				\$381,587,571

*\$1,233 per hunter per season in 2017 dollars

Table 1. Summary of the economic impact of spring wild turkey hunting to western states' economies.

REFERENCES

- Southwick Associates, Inc., 2003. The 2003 Economic Contributions of Spring Turkey Hunting. www.southwickassociates.com, 28pp <http://www.southwickassociates.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/NWTFSpringTurkeyReport.pdf>
- In 2017 dollars. <http://www.usinflationcalculator.com/>

Colville Wild Turkey Daze

COLVILLE, WA

Colville Wild Turkey Daze is held each April in Colville, Washington and is a welcome boost to the local economy. "Turkey hunting season is a nice shot in the arm, especially in the spring of the year because there is not much going on before fishing starts that time of the year," says Tim Nizich, manager of Clark's All-Sports in Colville. Nizich said they see quite an influx of turkey hunters from outside the area, patronizing their grocery stores, motels and stores such

as Clark's All-Sports. Scott Petersen, general manager of the Wal-Mart Super Store in Colville, echoed Nizich's comments. "Colville is the 'Turkey Capital of Washington;' there is even a banner hanging across Main Street. We absolutely notice a difference in town during turkey season." When you consider a small rural town like Colville, hunting drives business whether you run a hotel, gas stations or retail store. Colville is perfectly situated as a hub to access public land, making it a

great central location to replenish supplies for hunters chasing wild turkeys in the spring. The Colville Chamber of Commerce also co-sponsors a banquet with the National Wild Turkey Federation to raise money for turkey habitat and to recognize Stevens County as the number one turkey hunting county in Washington State. Stevens County hunters have numerous Merriam's turkeys listed in the top 10 for size in the whole country.

Louis Janke (Mayor, Colville, WA) – "Turkey hunting is a popular endeavor. Motels have quite a few turkey hunters that come in, which benefits the city restaurants, lodging and gas stations. All in all it's a very positive thing."

Old West Invitational Hunt – HULETT, WY

The Old West Invitational Hunt, held near Hulett, Wyoming, each spring is a welcome addition to the local economy. The many turkey hunters who frequent the Black Hills National Forest and private lands around the Hulett area, translates into about 160 hunters staying in local hotels. Conservatively estimating that hunters double-up in rooms at an average rate of \$80/room/night and an average stay of three nights, this translates into more than \$19,000 to the local economy. The owners of local restaurants estimate they serve 350 meals to turkey hunters each season for a total benefit to the economy of more than \$5,250.

The local bar and grocery store do much better, likely due to

campers on the National Forest coming in at night for a drink or groceries. The Rodeo Bar estimated \$17,000 in purchases from hunters during the spring turkey season. Grocery store purchases are difficult to ascertain but a local grocery store owner commented that there are "a lot of folks in camo buying groceries." These estimates of contributions to the local economy don't include the many hunters that stay and hunt with local outfitters or the gallons of gas and multitude of snacks purchased at local convenience stores. The Old West Invitational brings in a fair portion of the annual business during the spring turkey season. Additionally, \$40,000 - \$50,000 from the proceeds raised each year from this event goes to the Hulett Community Center.

Vivian Odell (Mayor, Hulett, WY) – "Visiting spring and fall turkey hunters are a huge benefit to our local shops, helping them to be financially able to stay open year-round. Once turkey hunters arrive in Hulett, it becomes conscious – the truly mutual and beneficial relationship we have together."

Craig Showalter (President of the Wyoming Community Foundation) Showalter who assists with hosting the Old West Invitational Turkey Hunt based in Hulett – "Since we began our partnership with the Greater Hulett Community Center and the community of Hulett six years ago, we have raised over a half-million dollars. It simply would not have been possible if it wasn't for the Merriam's wild turkey. Now that's a lot of scratch, economic benefit, from hunters who are willing to chase the species around the globe!"

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