



A L A B A M A

Full Fans & Sharp Spurs



WILD TURKEY REPORT 2017



Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources



2017 ALABAMA WILD TURKEY REPORT

Welcome to Full Fans & Sharp Spurs the fourth edition of the Alabama Department of Conservation & Natural Resources, Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries Division, Wild Turkey Program report. This report provides turkey hunters and others with information concerning Alabama's wild turkey resource. The report contains biological and sociological data used by ADCNR to monitor and manage the state's turkey population.

This year we saw a slight decrease in participation in the avid turkey hunter survey, and we continue to encourage all turkey hunters to become partners with ADCNR in the conservation and management of Alabama's wild turkeys. Your participation in the avid turkey hunter survey is key to providing vital information used to better manage the resource. Any avid turkey hunter who would like to participate in the survey should contact Steve Barnett, Alabama Turkey Project Leader at steve.barnett@dcnr.alabama.gov.

Your membership in the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) benefits wild turkeys in Alabama tremendously. The Alabama Chapter of the NWTf is a strong supporter of ADCNR and their efforts to manage turkeys in Alabama. Through Hunting Heritage Super Fund and Tag Fund expenditures as well as property acquisitions, NWTf has helped open access for hunters to thousands of acres and has enhanced even more acres for wild turkey in Alabama. In addition, NWTf sponsors a reward program for people who provide significant information that leads to conviction of people illegally hunting turkeys. Anyone with information on illegal turkey hunting in Alabama should call 1-800-GameWatch.

Thank you for your efforts to enhance the management of that noble bird, the wild turkey. ♡

Cover Photo: Tes Randle Jolly



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries Division (WFF) is pleased to share the fourth edition of our Wild Turkey Program Report, Full Fans & Sharp Spurs. In these pages, you will find results of our avid turkey hunter survey as well as our wild turkey brood survey. While this is not scientific data, it is valuable information that over time will reveal trends in our wild turkey population. We hope you enjoy this program report and extend you an invitation to assist us in collecting data. You will find directions for how you can assist inside.

This publication is a joint venture with the Alabama Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf). NWTf is a strong conservation partner putting thousands of dollars on the ground in Alabama and across the country.

This report would not have been possible without the assistance of the ADCNR IT staff, ADCNR Information and Education staff, the field staff of the Wildlife Section and the members of the Alabama Wild Turkey Committee.

The data in this report was provided by WFF Division staff, other agency personnel, private landowners and turkey hunters from across the state. It would not be possible without your continued support. Special recognition is due to Joel Glover who recently retired from WFF Division and whose efforts played a large role in advocating for and assisting with the development of this publication.

Thank you all.
Steve Barnett

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www.outdooralabama.com



Kay Ivey – *Governor*

Alabama is one of the best places in the nation to hunt the Eastern wild turkey. Our hearty bag limit of five turkeys in the combined fall and spring seasons makes our state a destination for hunters. Thanks to the support of hunters like you, the Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries is able to properly manage the turkey population as well as conduct research projects which provide insight on the survival and productivity of this cagey bird.

If you regularly hunt turkeys in Alabama, I encourage you to help the Division by participating as a member of the Avid Turkey Hunter Team. By reporting the information you see and hear in the woods, you will help the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources continue to manage this species for all Alabamians today, and for those future generations to come.



Christopher M. Blankenship –

Commissioner, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

As any experienced turkey hunter will tell you, Alabama boasts some of the best turkey hunting in North America. It's not because our Eastern wild turkeys are easy to fool – it's just the opposite. Our turkeys put hunters in some of the most challenging situations imaginable.

This treasured outdoors endeavor makes our great state special, and we want to keep it that way. That is why Game Check and the Avid Turkey Hunter Survey are so important to our efforts to gain as much information as possible on Alabama's turkey population.

The Full Fans & Sharp Spurs publication is compiled from data collected by wildlife managers and turkey hunters who spend as much time as possible in the turkey woods. The data gives the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division the information needed to ensure the majestic wild turkey continues to thrive despite pressure from a variety of sources, including hunting, predators and habitat depletion.

Hunters are required to report their harvests of wild turkeys through the Game Check system. According to last year's numbers, about 40 percent of turkey hunters were in compliance. We need more turkey hunters to fulfill the mandatory Game Check requirement to increase the integrity of the data collected.

We also need more turkey hunters who are constantly in the woods during the spring to participate in the Avid Turkey Hunter Survey to give our wildlife managers even more information about gobbling and turkeys sighted.

Alabama is a turkey hunting destination. Please join our efforts to make sure it stays that way.



Chuck Sykes – *Director, Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries Division*

Last season was huge success in my book. It was evident in harvests I was associated with that the poor hunting conditions of the previous two springs had allowed many older age class birds to survive. In addition, I personally saw more poults during the spring of 2017 than I had in the previous two years combined.

I want to thank the Alabama State Chapter of the NWTF for their continued support of turkey conservation and turkey hunters. Without their financial support and the willing participation of their members and many others in the avid turkey hunter survey, this publication wouldn't be possible.

The first year's data in Game Check yielded better information than the three years prior. However, we still have a long way to go with only an estimated 40 percent of the turkey hunters reporting their harvests. But, I'm confident compliance will get better with each year.

2018 is looking bright for turkeys and turkey hunters and I can't wait to hear the first gobble of spring. Good luck this season in the turkey woods and hopefully your ears will be filled with gobbles and your game bag with full fans and sharp spurs!



TABLE OF CONTENTS

WFF Turkey Committee, District Map and Contacts.....	5
Alabama Hunting and Fishing Funding Facts.....	7
Alabama Turkey Surveys by District	8
District 1	9
District 2	11
District 3	13
District 4	16
District 5	18
Brood Survey.....	20
Join the Avid Turkey Hunter Survey Team.....	22
Game Check and Wild Turkeys	24
First Harvest Certificate.....	25
Nothing Has Changed – Or Has It?	26
Technical Assistance with Wildlife Management	29
NWTF President and Biologist	30
NWTF Shotgun Giveaway Winner	31
NWTF Officer of the Year.....	32
Hunting Heritage Superfund	34
Alabama State Superfund Expenditures.....	35
NWTF License Plate.....	37
National Archery in the Schools Program	38
Become a Hunting Mentor.....	40
Save the Habitat. Save the Hunt.	41
Wild Turkey –A Struggle To Survive.....	42
Turkey Research Project Update	44
Wild Turkey Disease Mortality Form.....	46

WILDLIFE AND FRESHWATER FISHERIES TURKEY COMMITTEE – Formed 2014



Alabamians have enjoyed a healthy wild turkey population for decades. Through trapping and relocation, Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries (WFF) replenished and bolstered wild turkey numbers throughout Alabama and in other states as well.

Turkey hunters in Alabama are afforded one of the longest spring seasons and most liberal bag limits in the country.

In the past, Alabama's turkey management team has consisted of primarily a turkey project leader and an assistant. These biologists have monitored the population trends in Alabama and surrounding states. Recently, neighboring states have reported a decline in their turkey populations. Furthermore, our

statewide surveys have indicated a downward trend in our reproductive success. These factors prompted the wildlife section to form a turkey committee with representation from each WFF district.

These wildlife biologists have conducted stakeholder meetings to solicit input from hunters and have met extensively with researchers from Auburn University. These collaborations have resulted in a Wild Turkey Research Project on a scale never attempted in Alabama. We are measuring survival, productivity and movements of turkeys in the three most significant landscapes for turkey populations in the state. This information will provide valuable insights for future wild turkey management. Working together, we hope to ensure the maximum sustainable wild turkey population to be enjoyed by future generations.

Alabama Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries – District Offices

District 1

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dcnr.d1wff@dcnr.alabama.gov

District 2

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dcnr.d2wff@dcnr.alabama.gov

District 3

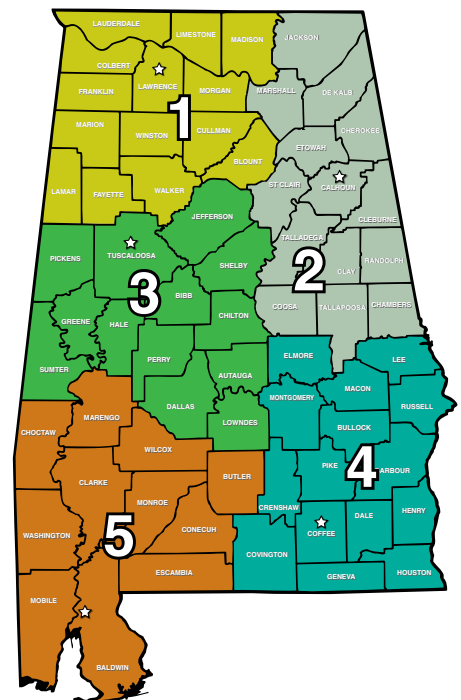
8211 McFarland Blvd., West
Northport, AL 35476
205-339-5716 (Northport)
334-289-8030 (Demopolis)
dcnr.d3wff@dcnr.alabama.gov

District 4

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District 5

30571 Five Rivers Blvd.
Spanish Fort, AL 36527
251-626-5474
dcnr.d5wff@dcnr.alabama.gov





ADCNR COMMITTEE MEMBERS



Matt Brock — *District 1 Wildlife Biologist*

Matt Brock earned his B.S. degree in Wildlife Science from Mississippi State University in 2007. He began his career as a Regional Wildlife Biologist with Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks. He assisted with and coordinated habitat management activities on private and public lands. In December of 2011 he joined the ADCNR Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division where he serves as a wildlife biologist in the Technical Assistance Group, assisting private landowners in north Alabama. Matt is a valuable asset to the turkey committee due to his knowledge of upland habitat management and interests in continuing turkey hunting opportunities for generations to come.



Courtenay Conring — *District 2 Wildlife Biologist*

Courtenay Conring earned her B.S. degree in Wildlife Sciences and Management from the University of Georgia in 2013 and her M.S. degree in Wildlife, Aquatic, and Wildlands Science and Management from Texas Tech University in 2016. She has worked on wildlife refuges managing for an array of gamebird species and assisted in research projects focusing on gamebirds, including waterfowl, sandhill cranes, and northern bobwhites throughout the southern United States. In December of 2016, she accepted a position with the ADCNR Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division as the biologist over the Jackson County Waterfowl Areas. She is excited to serve as the District II State Turkey Committee member and is passionate about improving habitat for wild turkeys, assisting in turkey research, and preserving the turkey hunting heritage across Alabama.



Jeff Makemson — *District 3 Wildlife Biologist*

Jeff Makemson is a Certified Wildlife Biologist® and has been employed by the ADCNR Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division for 25 years. He earned his B.S. degree in Wildlife Science from Auburn University in 1989. Jeff has worked as the wildlife biologist on Oakmulgee WMA his entire career. Through his management efforts, and with the partnership of the U.S. Forest Service, the 45,000-acre Oakmulgee WMA is one of the state's top public turkey hunting areas.



Adam Pritchett — *District 4 Wildlife Biologist*

Adam Pritchett earned his B.S. degree in Wildlife Sciences from Auburn University in 2002. He began his career as a wildlife biologist with the ADCNR Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division in 2005 at Barbour WMA, where his continued efforts to enhance habitat for wildlife populations on the 29,000-acre WMA has made it one of the more popular public turkey hunting areas in southeast Alabama. Adam provides technical assistance to landowners for managing the wildlife on their property.



Steve Barnett — *District 5 Wildlife Biologist*

Steve Barnett is a Certified Wildlife Biologist®. He earned a B.S. degree in Wildlife Management from Auburn University in 1984 and has worked for the ADCNR Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division since 1986. He is the Supervising District Wildlife Biologist for an 11-county region in southwest Alabama and serves as the Wild Turkey Project Leader coordinating programs such as the Avid Turkey Hunter Survey and Brood Survey. Steve leads the ADCNR Wild Turkey Committee, composed of wildlife biologists representing each region, in making statewide turkey management recommendations. He also serves on the Technical Committee of the National Wild Turkey Federation coordinating grant funded projects and has been involved in several cooperative wild turkey research projects in Alabama. Steve and wife Victoria co-authored the book, *The Wild Turkey in Alabama*, in 2008.

NWTF & AWF COMMITTEE MEMBERS



Brandon Bobo — National Wild Turkey Federation Wildlife Biologist

Brandon Bobo received his bachelor's degree from Auburn University in Wildlife Sciences while working for the National Park Service. He has served as the Mississippi Regional Biologist for the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) since February 2013. With NWTF, Brandon is primarily responsible for giving technical assistance and providing guidance on management plans to landowners. He has served on the Mississippi Longleaf Council, Mississippi Prescribed Fire Council, ADCNR Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Turkey Committee, and Talladega Longleaf Implementation Team.



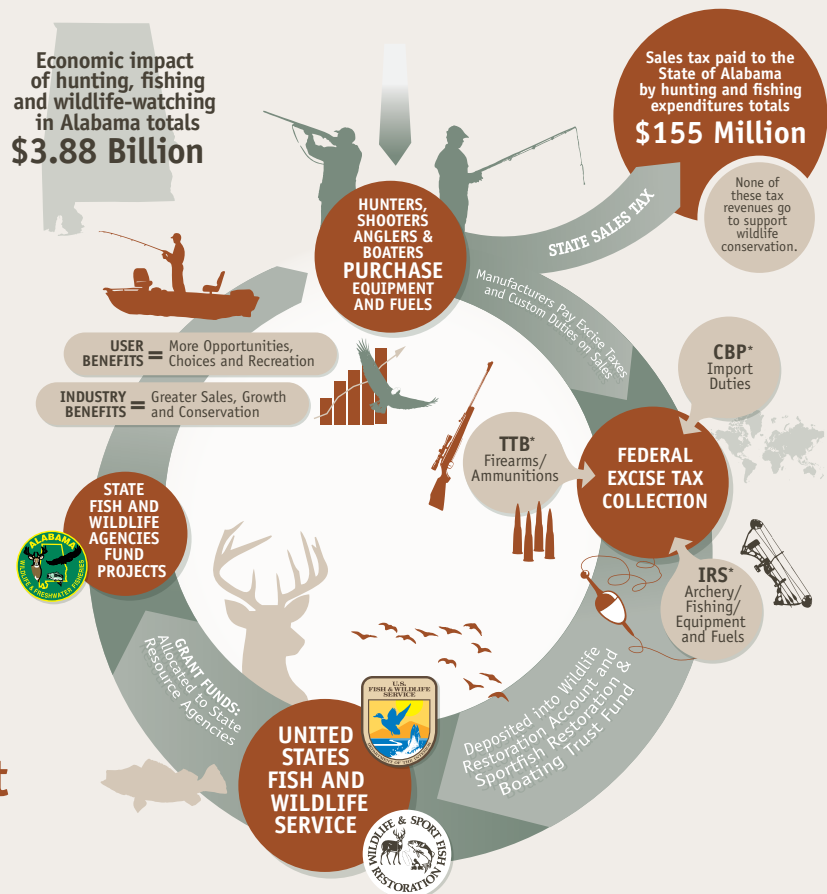
Kyle Marable — Alabama Wildlife Federation Wildlife Biologist

Kyle Marable holds a B.S. in Wildlife Sciences from Auburn University and a M.S. in Wildlife and Fisheries Science from Mississippi State University. Between undergraduate and graduate school, Kyle primarily worked to establish upland quail habitat as part of a Habitat Improvement Team in western Kentucky. His passion for ecosystem establishment, restoration and management led him to join the Alabama Wildlife Federation as a Resource Stewardship Biologist. Kyle is excited to represent AWF on the turkey committee and work toward improving the habitat and understanding of wild turkeys in Alabama.

HOW HUNTING AND FISHING IS FUNDED IN ALABAMA

Hunting and Fishing are great pastimes that offer tremendous recreational value for the participants. Conservation is big business for the state's economy and benefits all Alabama citizens, whether they hunt or not. It is important that everyone has an understanding of the economic importance of hunting and fishing in Alabama.

Not everyone helps fund wildlife conservation, but everyone benefits.





ALABAMA TURKEY SURVEYS



ALABAMA AVID TURKEY HUNTER SURVEY (2017 RESULTS)

The Alabama Avid Turkey Hunter Survey was initiated in 2014 to provide the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) with biological information about wild turkey populations in the state. Cooperating hunters are asked each year to record observations from their hunts during the spring season. The gobbling activity and observational data obtained assists Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries (WFF) wildlife biologists in monitoring turkey populations and in making management decisions. WFF appreciates those who are willing to take time to collect and submit this valuable information. All turkey hunters are encouraged to take part in this effort. This is an opportunity to be directly involved in the conservation and management of wild turkeys in Alabama. An invitation to participate in the survey is located in this report.

Gobbling Activity

The number of individual gobblers and total number of gobbles heard are used as indices to gobbling activity.

Gobbling activity is reported as the average number of gobbles heard during 10 hours of hunting. Gobbling activity is considered an indicator of hunting quality and may show a trend reflecting the number of gobblers in the population. The data can also be used to examine trends in the chronology of peak gobbling activity throughout a season.

Turkey Observations

Turkey observations are classified as gobblers, jakes and hens. Observation rates are reported as the average number of gobblers, jakes or hens observed during 100 hours of hunting. Observation rates provide indices to sex ratios, gobbler age ratios, and population size and trends. Jake observations reflect recruitment of males into the population from the previous year's hatch, and provide an index to the potential number of 2-year-old gobblers in the population during the next spring turkey season. High numbers of 2-year-old gobblers often lends itself to a good gobbling year. ♡



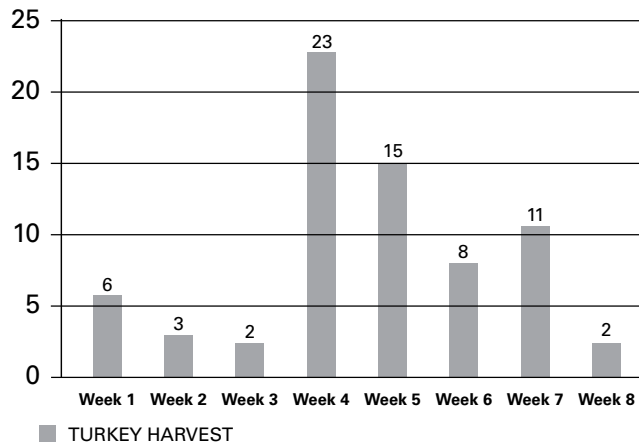
DISTRICT 1

District 1 is comprised of 14 counties in the northwest part of the state. It has several physiographic regions that are unique to north Alabama. The Plateau region consists of the Interior Low Plateau, Appalachian Plateau, and Tennessee Valley regions. The plateau is dominated by upland Oak/Hickory and Oak/Pine forest intermingled with pasture, grazing, and agricultural crops. Soils adjacent to the major rivers and flood plains in this region are highly fertile, and thus support much agricultural production, especially in the Tennessee Valley. Topography can vary greatly from steep ridges to low lying valleys. The Fall Line Hills separate the Appalachian Plateau from the Upper Coastal Plain. This area is characterized by gently rolling hills dominated by Pine/Oak forest and Oak/Gum/Cypress bottom lands near major drainages. The greatest habitat diversity in the state is located in the Fall Line Hills.

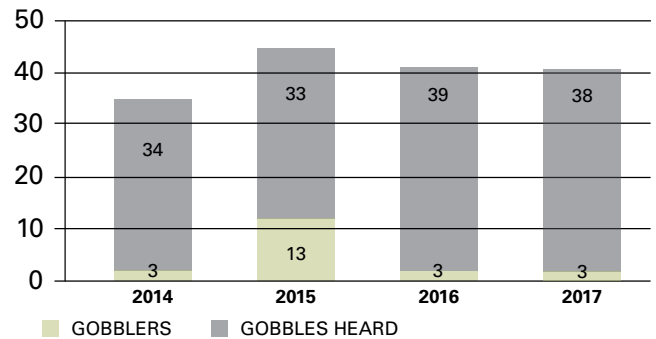
Harvest and Observations

Cooperators in District 1 reported hearing 11,399 gobblers from 912 gobblers and harvesting 70 birds during the 2017 spring turkey season. Within the district, harvest intensity was greatest during mid- and late- season, with peak harvest activity occurring during weeks 4 and 5.

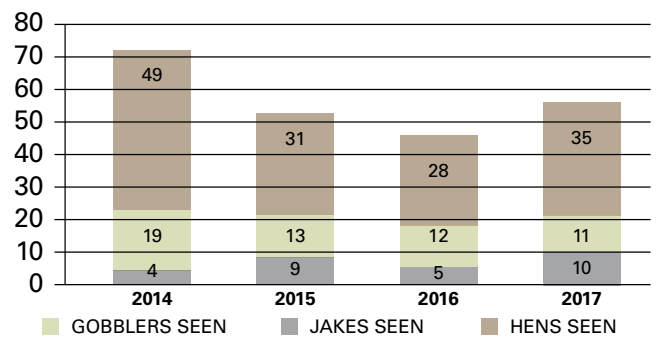
Spring Season Harvest by Week



Gobblers and Gobblers Heard per 10 Hours Hunted



Turkey Observations per 100 Hours Hunted



District 1 - Wildlife Management Areas that Provide Turkey Hunting

LAUDERDALE WMA

By Daniel Toole, WMA Wildlife Biologist

Lauderdale WMA encompasses 20,343 acres in Lauderdale County acquired under the Forever Wild Program and the Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries (WFF). The WMA consists of mature hardwoods, loblolly pine plantations, short-leaf pine reforestation areas, and recently harvested areas. Hardwood drains of various sizes and shapes designated as stream-side management zones are interspersed throughout the pine plantations of varying age classes. This diversity of timber types is managed to provide a multitude of habitat compartments

for wild turkeys. Prescribed burning has been utilized in past years on the WMA on a relatively small scale. Beginning in fall 2014, prescribed burning efforts were increased greatly and will continue to be implemented on a three-year interval as a major tool to improve and maintain favorable habitats for wild turkeys. In conjunction with previously established wildlife openings, additional early successional units will be created and managed with prescribed fire, drum chopping, bush-hogging and seasonal disking. For more information on Lauderdale WMA, contact the District 1 Wildlife office at 256-353-2634.

RIVERTON COMMUNITY HUNTING AREA

By Daniel Toole, WMA Wildlife Biologist

Riverton Community Hunting Area (CHA) encompasses approximately 5,500 acres in Colbert County acquired by the Forever Wild Program. Loblolly pine plantations, shortleaf pine reforestation, and areas of recent timber harvests dominate the upland landscape on this CHA. Streamside management zones are interspersed throughout the area, providing a bottomland hardwood component to the landscape. For more information on Riverton CHA, contact the District 1 Wildlife office at 256-353-2634.

FREEDOM HILLS WMA

By Daniel Toole, WMA Wildlife Biologist

Freedom Hills WMA occupies approximately 33,000 acres in Colbert County acquired by the Forever Wild Program and WFF. The WMA contains tracts of mature hardwoods, dense loblolly pine plantations, shortleaf pine reforestation and recently harvested areas. Hardwood drains of various sizes and shapes are interspersed throughout the WMA as streamside management zones among most of the plantation pines. Timber stand diversity provides a wide array of habitat types to benefit turkeys. Prescribed burning is being used on a three year interval to improve and maintain habitats beneficial to wild turkeys. In addition to wildlife openings, early successional units are being managed with prescribed fire, bush hogging and disking to provide turkey habitat. For more information on Freedom Hills WMA, contact the District 1 Wildlife office at 256-353-2634.

BLACK WARRIOR WMA

By Kevin Pugh, WMA Wildlife Biologist

Black Warrior WMA provides public hunting opportunities through a long-standing cooperative partnership with the U.S. Forest Service. This WMA is located within Bankhead National Forest in Winston and Lawrence counties and encompasses over 92,000 acres of U.S Forest Service Lands, including the 26,000-acre Sipsey Wilderness. Mature oak/hickory and mixed

hardwood/pine forest timber stand components dominate the landscape of the WMA. Recently, an effort to convert and restore loblolly pine stands to more naturally occurring shortleaf pine has been initiated. In addition, recent efforts to increase thinning operations in the pine stands has produced valuable early successional habitat for nesting and brood-rearing hens, which is of limited availability in this Forest. Prescribed fire is frequently implemented during both dormant and growing seasons to produce a wide array of vegetative diversity. Wildlife openings are planted with a variety of warm and cool season grains, peas and clovers in order to provide year-round supplemental food sources for wild turkey. For more information on the Black Warrior WMA, contact the District 1 Wildlife office at 256-353-2634.

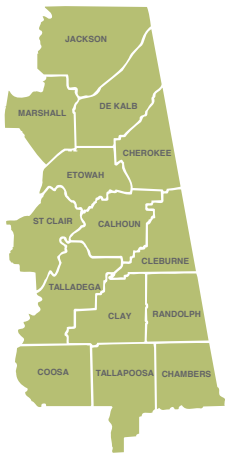
SAM R. MURPHY WMA

By Kevin Pugh, WMA Wildlife Biologist

Sam R. Murphy WMA contains approximately 17,625 acres located near Guin, Ala., in Marion and Lamar counties. The Murphy Family continues to participate as a valuable partner in conservation with WFF by providing public hunting opportunities at no cost to the State. Plantations of loblolly pine of various age classes tend to dominate the landscape of this commercial forested WMA, with stands of mature hardwoods along steep slopes and streamside management areas, with agricultural fields along the river. The numerous wildlife openings distributed throughout the WMA are managed to provide warm and cool season supplemental food sources to all species of wildlife. For more information on the Sam R. Murphy WMA, contact the District 1 Wildlife office at 256-353-2634. ✎



Tes Randle Jolly



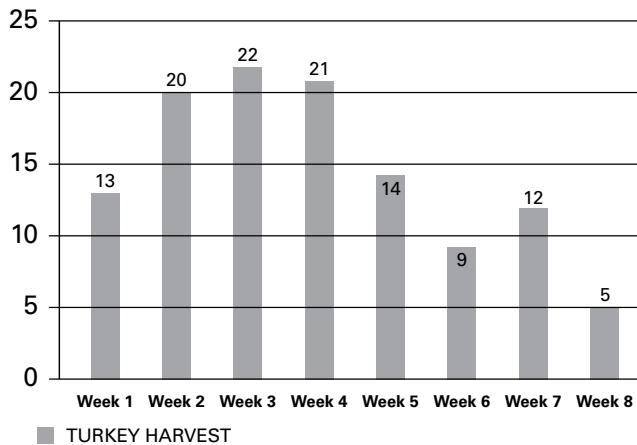
DISTRICT 2

District 2 consists of 14 counties stretching from east central Alabama to the northeast corner of the state. It is a diverse linear area that encompasses the Piedmont, Interior Plateau, Appalachian Plateau, and Ridge and Valley Physiogeographic Regions. The lower portion of the district is mostly rolling hills and becomes more mountainous as you move north. The flora is very diverse. Longleaf pine is found in the lower portion of the area while loblolly and shortleaf pine is more dominant further north. Deciduous forests of primarily oak and hickory are located throughout the region often in drainages and on steep ridges.

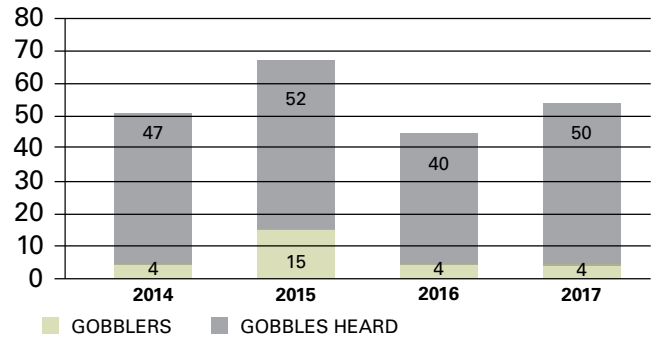
Harvest and Observations

Cooperators in District 2 reported hearing 19,654 gobblers from 1,732 gobblers and harvesting 116 birds during the 2017 spring turkey season. Within the district, harvest intensity was greatest during the first half of the season, with peak harvest activity occurring during weeks 3 and 4.

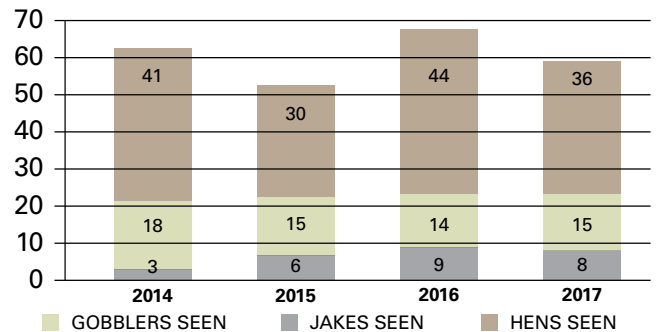
Spring Season Harvest by Week



Gobblers and Gobbles Heard per 10 Hours Hunted



Turkey Observations per 100 Hours Hunted



District 2 - Wildlife Management Areas that Provide Turkey Hunting

JACKSON COUNTY WMAS AND REFUGES

By Courtenay Conring, WMA Wildlife Biologist

Jackson County WMAs and Refuges are comprised of three WMAs and two Refuges primarily managed for waterfowl and other small game. The WMAs and Refuges combined are 26,934 acres and are located in Northeast AL between the towns of Scottsboro and Stevenson. The WMAs and Refuges are provided through a partnership between Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division (WFF). One of the Jackson County WMAs, Raccoon Creek WMA, has a tract acquired through the Forever Wild Program named Coon Gulf Tract. This property is 3,500 acres of mountainous terrain with oak-hickory hardwood forested slopes and planted pines with a few grass openings intermixed on the plateau. Native warm season grasses are managed for in the openings through

a bi-annual prescribed fire regime to provide more nesting and brood-rearing habitat for wild turkeys. Coon Gulf Tract is the only tract on the Jackson County WMAs and Refuges that offers turkey hunting opportunities. For more information about the Coon Gulf Forever Wild Tract, contact the Jackson Co. WMAs and Refuges Office at 256-437-2788.

JAMES D. MARTIN – SKYLINE WMA

By Frank Allen, WMA Wildlife Biologist

James D. Martin–Skyline WMA is located approximately 17 miles North of Scottsboro in Jackson County. The WMA represents a cooperative partnership of landowners including Alabama Power Company, the Forever Wild Land Trust, and WFF. The area is

District 2 - Wildlife Management Areas that Provide Turkey Hunting - (Continued)

60,732 acres and represents a varied collection of habitats including mature hardwood forests, upland pine stands, active timber harvests, fallow areas, and agricultural fields. The area is managed for wild turkeys through prescribed burning, management of cool and warm season wildlife openings, timber stand improvements, native warm season grass establishment, and roadside management to promote bugging areas for hens and broods. Habitat diversity across the north Alabama landscape allows for suitable nesting, brood-rearing and winter range habitats across the WMA. For additional information about hunting at James D. Martin-Skyline WMA, please call 256-587-3114.

LITTLE RIVER WMA

By Brandon Howell, WMA Wildlife Biologist

Little River WMA exists through a cooperative partnership between the Alabama Division of State Parks, National Parks Service, the Forever Wild Land Trust and WFF. Located just east of Fort Payne in Cherokee and DeKalb Counties, the WMA occupies a little over 13,000 acres and represents land tracts held by the cooperative agencies and programs. Habitat types range from plantations of loblolly pine on the plateau to the hardwoods spanning from the slopes to the bottomlands along Little River. Timber thinning operations and prescribed fire are utilized to encourage open habitats of early successional vegetative species to produce nesting and brood rearing habitat for wild turkey throughout the WMA. Warm and cool season herbaceous plantings are also established throughout the WMA to provide supplemental nutrition and provide additional habitat. For more information on the WMA, contact the District Office at 256-435-5422.

CHOCOLOCCO WMA

By Brandon Howell, WMA Wildlife Biologist

Choccolocco WMA represents a continued cooperative conservation effort between the U.S. Forest Service, Alabama Forestry Commission, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and WFF. The WMA is located just east of the Anniston/ Oxford area in Calhoun and Cleburne counties and occupies over 56,000 acres comprised of land owned by the Alabama Forestry Commission, U.S. Forest Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The WMA hosts a wide array of habitat types including longleaf pine stands, plantations of loblolly pine, mixed hardwood pine forests, upland and bottomland hardwoods of all age classes and recently harvested areas. Timber stand management practices such as mid-rotation timber removal, thinning operations and prescribed burning all make for a considerable contribution to the wild turkey populations residing on the Choccolocco WMA. These management strategies have greatly increased the number of turkeys in the past two decades and will likely continue due to our valuable cooperative partnerships. For

more information on Choccolocco WMA, contact the District Office at 256-435-5422.

HOLLINS WMA

By Steven Mitchell, WMA Wildlife Biologist

Hollins WMA represents a cooperative partnership between the U.S. Forest Service, Evergreen Forest LLC, 19 private landowners and WFF. The WMA provides 28,802 acres of public hunting opportunity in the rolling Appalachian foothills near the small town of Hollins in Clay and Talladega counties. The area consists of mature longleaf pine stands, mixed hardwood-pine stands, and hardwood drains. Over 120 permanent wildlife openings have been established throughout the WMA and maintained in a variety of warm and cool season plantings for wild turkey and other wildlife species. Long rotation longleaf and loblolly pine timber management coupled with a three-year rotational prescribed fire regime produces a valuable collection of habitats for wild turkeys. Other management practices that benefit turkey populations include mowing, strip disking, and selective timber harvesting. For more information on Hollins WMA, contact the District II Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Office at (256) 435-5422.

COOSA WMA

By Steven Mitchell, WMA Wildlife Biologist

Coosa WMA encompasses 22,988 acres near Rockford in Coosa County. The WMA is comprised of land acquired by the Forever Wild Program and WFF, and lands of our cooperative partners including Alabama Power Company, Kaul Lumber Company, Cahaba Timber, International Paper, and F. Perkins to provide public hunting opportunities. Coosa WMA represents one of the state's oldest established hunting areas. The west side of the area is bordered by the Coosa River, with portions of Mitchell Lake contained inside the WMA. The WMA accounts for thousands of acres of mountain longleaf pine habitat interspersed with hardwood drains, mixed pine-hardwood, and recently harvested areas in the process of being restored to longleaf pine stands. The property hosts one of the last remaining populations of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers (RCW) outside of Alabama's National Forest system. Heavy thinning operations of mature pine stands and prescribed burning conducted on three to five year rotations are management practices used to manage for RCWs. These wildlife management techniques also serve to create ideal nesting and brooding habitat for wild turkeys. Other management practices used to benefit wild turkeys on the area include mowing, strip disking, and maintaining permanent wildlife openings in a variety of warm and cool season forages. For more information on Coosa WMA, contact the District II Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Office at (256) 435-5422. ♡



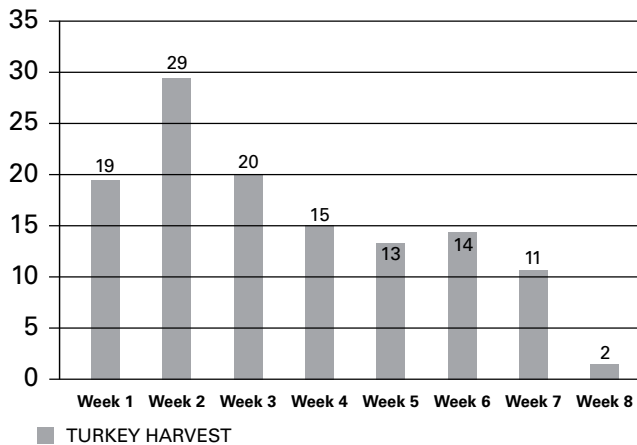
DISTRICT 3

This region consists of 13 counties in west central Alabama. It is a very diverse region consisting of eight ecoregions: southern inner piedmont, blackland prairie, flatwoods/blackland prairie margins, fall line hills, southeastern floodplains and low terraces, low rolling hills, sandstone ridges and shale hills. The southern portion consists mostly of blackland prairie, bottomland hardwood, Oak/Gum Cypress bottomlands near major drainages and industrial pine forest habitats. This area lies below the fall line and has mostly flat, to slightly rolling, terrain. Soils adjacent to the major rivers and flood plains in this region are highly fertile, and thus support much agricultural production. The soils are typically not rocky. The northern portion of the district consists of the fall line hills with rocky soils. It is comprised of mostly oak/hickory, mixed pine/hardwoods, industrial pine forest habitats, intermixed with transition zones thus creating great habitat diversity.

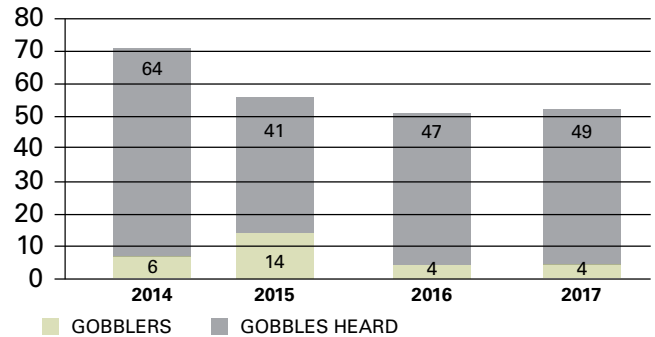
Harvest and Observations

Cooperators in District 3 reported hearing 25,956 gobblers from 1,992 gobblers and harvesting 123 birds during the 2017 spring turkey season. Within the district, harvest intensity was greatest during the first half of the season, with peak harvest activity occurring during weeks 2 and 3.

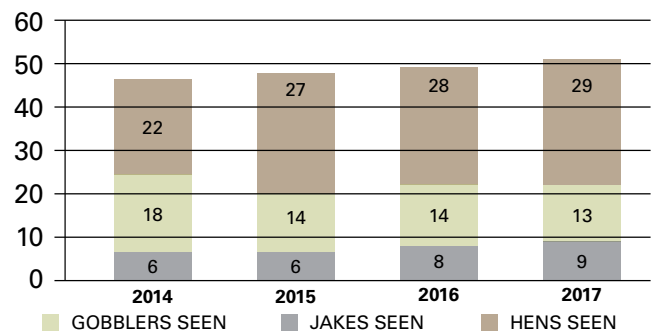
Spring Season Harvest by Week



Gobblers and Gobbles Heard per 10 Hours Hunted



Turkey Observations per 100 Hours Hunted



District 3 - Wildlife Management Areas that Provide Turkey Hunting

CHARLES D. KELLEY-AUTAUGA WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

By Jeff L. Makemson, District Supervising Biologist

The Charles D. Kelley / Autauga Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is 9,138 acres, centrally located in Alabama. It is in northeastern Autauga County, 15 miles north of Prattville. Historically, the area has been managed in industrial pine forest planted in loblolly and longleaf. Hardwoods are found in the bottomlands and established streamside management zones. Rolling hills and sandy soils are found throughout this unique and diverse WMA. This important public outdoor recreational area was recently purchased in phases by the Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries and the Forever Wild Land

Program. The WMA is managed through a partnership with the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries and State Lands Division of the Alabama Department of Conservation. Sportsman may pursue both small and big game animals while other outdoor enthusiast can soak up nature in the forest by taking a stroll down one of the many roads meandering throughout the property. The area boasts a healthy population of white-tail deer, turkey and small game animals. More than 80 wildlife openings are planted in a variety of cool and warm season crops for wildlife. Pine stands will be burned on a three- to five-year rotation to enhance nesting and brood rearing habitat for many wildlife species. Extensive powerline right of ways and old logging decks are mowed to maintain early successional habitat. Gates have been installed to minimize vehicular disturbance during peak nesting and brood rearing season for many wildlife species. Some areas

District 3 - Wildlife Management Areas that Provide Turkey Hunting - (Continued)

will remain gated during turkey season to create popular walk-in turkey hunting areas. Many generations of Alabamians will greatly benefit from this public land acquisition and conservation partnership. For more information about this area please contact the District III Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Office at 205-339-5716

CEDAR CREEK SPECIAL OPPORTUNITY HUNTING AREA (SOA)

By Jeff L. Makemson, District Supervising Biologist

Cedar Creek SOA is an exciting new public land hunting opportunity for the 2017-18 season. This unique property is in South Dallas County bordering the Alabama River and Cedar Creek, between Selma and Camden. The Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, along with the Forever Wild Land Program, purchased this property for the public to experience this special hunting opportunity. This Special Opportunity Area (SOA) will have a limited number of slots for a successful permit holder and guest to hunt a dedicated 300-400-acre unit for 2-4 days. These smaller units and limited quota (random drawn permits) hunting format is to reduce hunting pressure and increase the quality of the hunting experience. Permits to hunt the SOA are obtained through an on-line selection process. Interested hunters can apply and pick their preferred hunt dates. The cost for this unique hunting experience is only the purchase of a state hunting license and WMA license. Management of the SOA will be conducted by the conservation partnership of the Alabama Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries and State Lands Division. In recent months, biologists have been busy repairing roadways, installing culverts, creating a parking area, installing an information kiosk, mowing roadways and wildlife openings. In each hunting unit, wildlife openings will be planted in a variety of cool-season crops to supplement the native vegetation available to benefit a variety of wildlife species. Prescribed fire will be introduced this winter in existing pine stands and will be conducted annually on a three-to five-year rotation. While current camera surveys indicate whitetail deer and turkey are found throughout the property, planned management efforts will greatly improve the habitat, population, health and age structure of these species. Many generations of Alabamians will greatly benefit from this public land acquisition and conservation part-

nership. For more information on Cedar Creek visit our website at outdooralabama.com, or contact the Demopolis Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Office at 334-289-8030.

MULBERRY FORK WMA

By Chas Moore, WMA Wildlife Biologist

Mulberry Fork WMA is located just north of the Black Warrior River in southern Walker and eastern Tuscaloosa counties near the town of Oakman. Hunting rights on this 33,280-acre tract were secured by the Forever Wild Program from Molpus Timberlands for WFF to manage and conduct public hunting programs. The terrain is very steep and rugged, as this area represents the southern end of the Appalachian Mountains. Molpus Timberlands primarily manages the loblolly pine stands on the WMA as a commercial forest with timber stand ages ranging from recently harvested to 25 years of growth. Streamside management zones are scattered and interspersed throughout the property and primarily consist of older aged hardwoods. Roughly 40 wildlife openings are planted annually for both cool and warm season supplemental forage for wild turkeys. For more information on hunting the Mulberry Fork WMA, please contact the District III Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Office at 205-339-5716.

WILLIAM R. IRELAND, SR.- CAHABA RIVER WMA

By Chas Moore, WMA Wildlife Biologist

William R. Ireland, Sr.-Cahaba River WMA lies along the Cahaba River in central Alabama in Shelby and Bibb counties near the towns of Helena, Montevallo, and West Blocton. The WMA encompasses a total land acreage of 37,897 acres. Molpus Timberlands owns 27,894 acres in which hunting rights have been acquired through the Forever Wild Program with WFF managing the hunting programs. Other valuable cooperative landowning partners include Hancock Forest Management (2,744 acres), RMS (3,070 acres), and USX (689 acres). The USFWS owns another 3,500 acres, known as the Cahaba River National Wildlife Refuge, and is included in the WMA. The terrain throughout the area is very steep, rocky, and rugged. The uplands are typically plantation pine stands managed on a 25- to 30-year rotation

with older stands typically being thinned. Streamside management zones are abundant along the many creeks that feed into the Cahaba River and are comprised of older aged hardwoods. Approximately 80 wildlife openings managed in cool season and warm season forage crops to benefit native wildlife of the WMA and are scattered throughout the area. For more information on William R. Ireland, Sr.-Cahaba River WMA, contact the District III Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Office at 205-339-5716.

OAKMULGEE WMA

Jeff Makemson, District Supervising Biologist

Oakmulgee Wildlife Management Area represents the oldest WMA in Alabama, established in 1937 as a cooperative partnership with the U.S. Forest Service. The WMA consists of 45,000 acres located in Bibb, Hale, Perry and Tuscaloosa counties in west central Alabama. The terrain is reminiscent of the landscape just north of the fall line with its moderate to steep rolling hills. Longleaf pine stands dominate the upland ridges with mature hardwoods in the bottomlands. Following U.S. Forest Service requirements to manage for the red-cockaded woodpecker, pine stands are thinned to a park-like appearance and burned on a three- to five-year rotation. The prescribed burning practice implemented by the U.S. Forest Service on the WMA greatly enhance habitat conditions for the wild turkey and many other wildlife species. This forest management regime type creates ideal nesting and brood rearing habitat for wild turkeys. More than 100 wildlife openings are planted and maintained in a variety of warm and cool season forages throughout the WMA. Selected areas are seasonally closed to motorized vehicles to create popular walk-in turkey hunting areas. For more information on Oakmulgee WMA, contact the District III Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Office at 205-339-5716.

LOWNDES WMA

Jeff Makemson, District Supervising Biologist

Lowndes WMA encompasses 15,920 acres acquired in a cooperative partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Forever Wild Program, and WFF to provide public hunting opportunities and other outdoor recreational activities. Lowndes WMA is located in the northwest corner of Lowndes County

approximately 4 miles northwest of the town of White Hall and 30 miles west of Montgomery. Lowndes WMA lies along the Alabama River and consists of fallow agricultural fields, hardwood river bottoms, swamp drainages, and mixed pine hardwood stands. Approximately 6,200 acres of fallow agricultural fields have been replanted with a mix of hardwood species. Eighty-seven permanent wildlife openings are scattered throughout the WMA, three Green Tree Waterfowl Reservoirs and mourning dove fields provide a diversity of outdoor recreational hunting opportunities. The wildlife openings are planted in a variety of cool season grains and clovers to benefit a variety of wildlife species. Loblolly pine stands on the area are prescribed burned on three-year rotations to provide suitable habitat and brood rearing for wild turkeys and other wildlife species. Other wildlife management practices that benefit wild turkey populations include mowing, strip disking, and selective timber harvests. For more information on hunting on Lowndes WMA, call the District III Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries office at (205) 339-5716.

DAVID K. NELSON WMA

By Justin Gilchrist, WMA Wildlife Biologist

David K. Nelson WMA is located at the confluence of Tombigbee and Black Warrior rivers near Demopolis, Alabama. The funding for this land acquisition and management support for this WMA are provided by our cooperative partner in conservation, the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. The WMA is composed of nine tracts of land comprising 8,557 acres. The WMA is predominately alluvial river floodplains and bottomland hardwood habitat intermixed with various managed pine stands and native warm season grasses. Approximately 70 acres of wildlife openings are planted annually in both warm and cool season seed varieties throughout the WMA. Pine stands and native warm season grass openings are burned on a three- to five- year rotation. These prescribe burns are implemented to provide maximum benefit and improved habitat quality for the wild turkey and a variety of other wildlife species. The 2,500-acre Damsite Tract is the only unit within the WMA that is accessible by vehicle. The remaining eight tracts are accessible by boat only. For more information concerning the David K. Nelson WMA, call the Demopolis Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries office at (334) 289-8030.



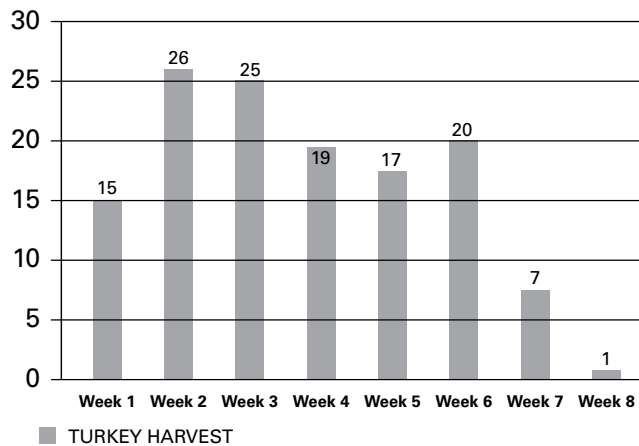
DISTRICT 4

This region consists of 15 counties in the southeastern corner of Alabama. This region has four eco-regions: piedmont, coastal plain, black belt and lower coastal plain. The piedmont area is located on the northern fringe of the region and is mostly mixed pine-hardwood forest type with rocky mountainous terrain. The black belt region is centrally located in the region and is mostly a grassland area with some oak-hickory forest along with loblolly pine plantations. The coastal plain has mostly hardwoods in the riparian areas and a mix of loblolly and longleaf pines in the uplands. The lower coastal plain is located along the southern most portion of the region and has swampy gum-cypress lowlands and the uplands are dominated by longleaf pine.

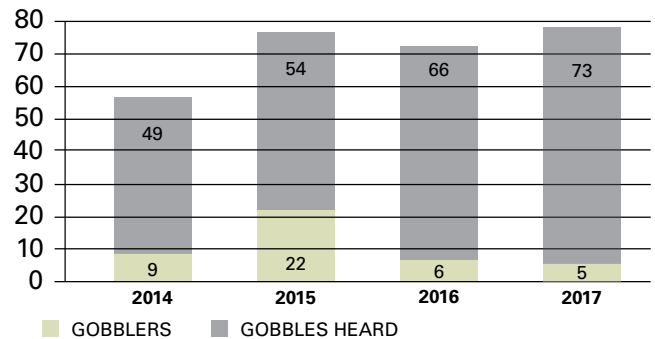
Harvest and Observations

Cooperators in District 4 reported hearing 24,815 gobblers from 1,810 gobblers and harvesting 130 birds during the 2017 spring turkey season. Within the district, harvest intensity was greatest during the first half of the season, with peak harvest activity occurring during weeks 2 and 3.

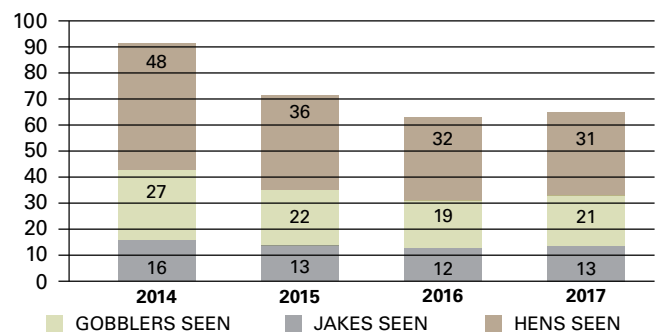
Spring Season Harvest by Week



Gobblers and Gobblers Heard per 10 Hours Hunted



Turkey Observations per 100 Hours Hunted



District 4 - Wildlife Management Areas that Provide Turkey Hunting

FOREVER WILD GOTHARD – AWF YATES LAKE WEST WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

By Richard Tharp, WMA Wildlife Biologist

Forever Wild Gothard–AWF Yates Lake West WMA is located in Elmore County just north of the city of Tallassee. The WMA encompasses 5,606-acres acquired by the Forever Wild Program to provide public hunting opportunities and is cooperatively

managed by State Lands Division and WFF. The area is heavily forested and primarily consists of uneven-aged, mixed hardwood-pine stands. Mature hardwoods are scattered throughout the area, primarily located along the steep slopes and drains that border the Tallapoosa River. Mature stands of longleaf pine can still be found along the ridge tops of gradually steepening slopes. No food plots are currently planted on the area, however, habitat management practices, such as prescribed burning, assists in improving habitat quality. For more information about Yates Lake WMA, please call 334-347-1298.

District 4 - Wildlife Management Areas that Provide Turkey Hunting - (Continued)

BARBOUR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

By Adam Pritchett, WMA Wildlife Biologist

Barbour WMA is located in Barbour and Bullock counties near the small town of Clayton. It encompasses 28,213 acres, including property acquired through the Forever Wild Program and WFF. Most of the area consists of longleaf and loblolly pine timber with hardwoods in the streamside management zones. The northern portion of the WMA has been restored to a longleaf pine ecosystem. Frequent prescribed burning is utilized as a habitat management tool on the entire area to produce viable turkey habitats. The long-term timber management goal is to establish uplands in an open pine habitat, converting loblolly pine stands to longleaf pine where soils are appropriate and maintain hardwood stands on steep slopes and in drainage systems. Permanent wildlife openings are scattered throughout the entire area and are planted with both warm and cool season crops to provide year round food and cover for turkey and other wildlife. For more information about hunting Barbour WMA, contact the area biologist at 334-529-3222.

BOGGY HOLLOW WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

By Griff Johnson, RF, WMA Wildlife Biologist

Boggy Hollow is a newly created Wildlife Management Area in cooperative partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, NWTF, and Quail Forever. Boggy Hollow consists of approximately 7,000 acres within the Conecuh National Forest in Covington County, Ala. The newly created WMA will be managed as a bobwhite quail focal area and will provide additional habitat for nongame species including gopher tortoise and red-cockaded woodpecker. Boggy Hollow WMA is located off State Route 137 just west of Wing, Ala. The terrain is flat to low rolling hills, typical of the lower coastal plain. Mature hardwoods primarily reside along streamside management zones and drains. The WMA will be open to hunting this fall. In addition to an emphasis on quail habitat, Boggy Hollow will also provide exclusive small game and deer hunting opportunities during regular season dates. Thursdays and Fridays will be dedicated to squirrel, rabbit, raccoon and opossum hunting. Quail hunters will have dedicated hunting days on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Deer hunters will

be given archery-only hunting days Sunday through Tuesday. Turkey hunting will also be permitted on Boggy Hollow, on regular season dates.

BLUE SPRING WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

By Griff Johnson, RF, WMA Wildlife Biologist

Blue Spring WMA is a cooperative partnership between the ADCNR Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division (WFF) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). Blue Springs WMA is 24,783 acres nestled within Conecuh National Forest. Longleaf and slash pine dominates the forest with some fire tolerant hardwoods in the uplands and bottomland stream corridors. The USFS manages the forest on a long term rotation of 70 plus years. These long rotations are part of their comprehensive plan to restore historical longleaf pine habitat in the coastal plain. The USFS utilizes prescribed fire on a 2- to 5-year rotation, and mechanical understory and midstory removal to help promote suitable habitat for a variety of species like Eastern wild turkey. In addition to USFS's forest management practices, WFF manages permanent wildlife openings to provide quality habitat for a variety of wildlife species. For more information about Blue Spring WMA, please call 1-334-898-7013.

GENEVA STATE FOREST WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

By Griff Johnson, RF, WMA Wildlife Biologist

Geneva State Forest WMA is a cooperative partnership between WFF and the Alabama Forestry Commission (AFC). It spans 16,634 acres, in which AFC owns 7,280 acres. AFC acreage is forested with longleaf and slash pine, burned at 2- to 3-year intervals. Some mature hardwoods are present along small creek bottoms. Through timber management carried out by AFC, a mosaic of suitable habitat is created for Eastern wild turkey. Two recent purchases by WFF added 9,354 acres to the WMA. The new addition consists of industrial managed loblolly pine plantations of varying age classes, in which several older stands have been thinned. Terrain on both ownerships is flat to low rolling hills. Permanent openings are managed to provide habitat for a variety of wildlife species. For more information about Geneva State Forest WMA, please call 1-334-898-7013. ✓



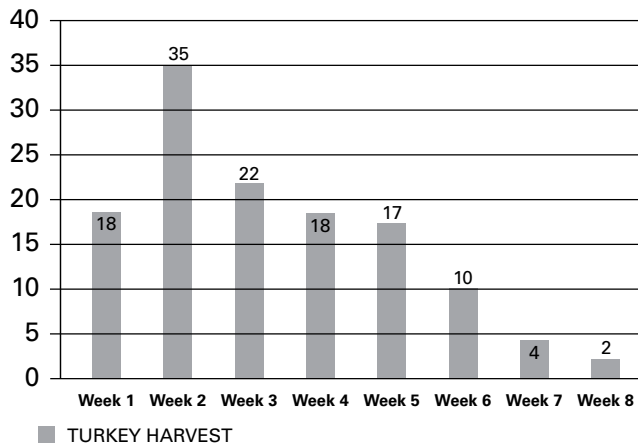
DISTRICT 5

District 5 consists of 11 counties in southwest Alabama. This ecoregion is part of the coastal plain, which rises from gentle, rolling hills in the south, to steep, mountain-like ridges to the north. The extreme north end of the district transitions to open prairie. This region is bisected by the lower reaches of the Alabama and Tombigbee Rivers, the confluence of which forms the Mobile-Tensaw Delta. Forest types include uplands dominated by piney woods interspersed with oak, beech, and magnolia with broad stream bottoms in oak, gum, bay, and cypress associations. Loblolly pine plantations are the major forest type throughout with scattered compartments of historic longleaf.

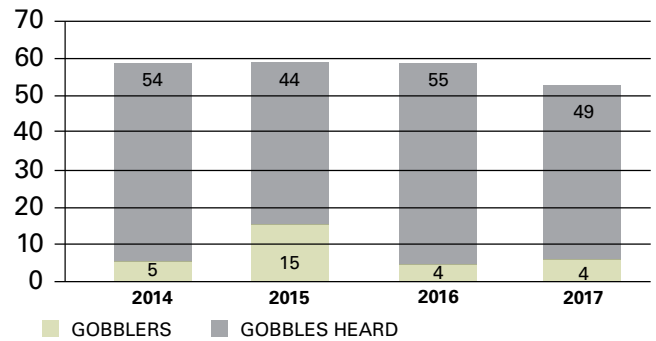
Harvest and Observations

Cooperators in District 5 reported hearing 21,479 gobblers from 1,623 gobblers and harvesting 126 birds during the 2017 spring turkey season. Within the district, harvest intensity was greatest during the first half of the season, with peak harvest activity occurring during weeks 2 and 3.

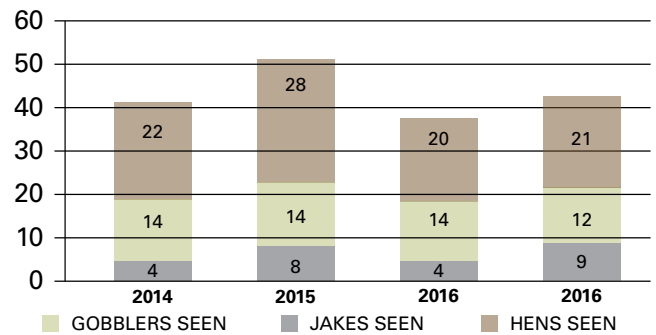
Spring Season Harvest by Week



Gobblers and Gobblers Heard per 10 Hours Hunted



Turkey Observations per 100 Hours Hunted



District 5 - Wildlife Management Areas that Provide Turkey Hunting

W. L. HOLLAND AND MOBILE-TENSAW DELTA WMA

By Thomas E Harms, WMA Wildlife Biologist

W.L. Holland and Mobile-Tensaw Delta WMA are located in the lower portion of the Mobile-Tensaw Delta south of Interstate 65 in Baldwin and Mobile counties. The area encompasses approx-

imately 51,040 acres of tracts acquired by the Forever Wild Program, WFF and our cooperative partners in conservation, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Ducks Unlimited. The W.L. Holland and Mobile-Tensaw Delta WMA are primarily composed of open marsh in the lower regions with islands of bay, cypress and tupelo gum as latitude increases, which is primarily accessible only by boat. Two compartments are accessible by

District 5 - Wildlife Management Areas that Provide Turkey Hunting - (Continued)

vehicle. One tract, termed the Jacinto Port tract, is in transition to be restored to a longleaf pine community leaving hammocks of live oaks with scattered pockets of other hardwoods in lower areas. Rotational prescribed burning of this tract will assist turkey populations in providing early successional acreage to enhance nesting and brood rearing habitats. For more information, contact the District V office at 251-626-5474.

PERDIDO RIVER WMA

By Steven W. Barnett, Supervising District Biologist

Perdido River WMA encompasses approximately 17,337 acres east of Robertsdale in Baldwin County. The acreage was acquired through purchases by the Forever Wild Program and State Lands Division to provide hunting and recreational opportunities in southwest Alabama. The WMA is primarily composed of plantation pine timber stands with interspersed streamside management zones along the drainages and the Perdido River. An effort to restore coastal tracts of longleaf, through the conversion of the numerous loblolly plantations is currently in progress on the WMA. Thinning operations of both loblolly and longleaf stands are being conducted and prescribed fire is currently being used to maintain these areas to provide improved nesting and brood rearing habitats on the area. Permanent wildlife openings are also maintained in a mixture of warm and cool season plantings

to benefit turkeys. For more information, contact the District V office at 251-626-5474.

UPPER DELTA WMA

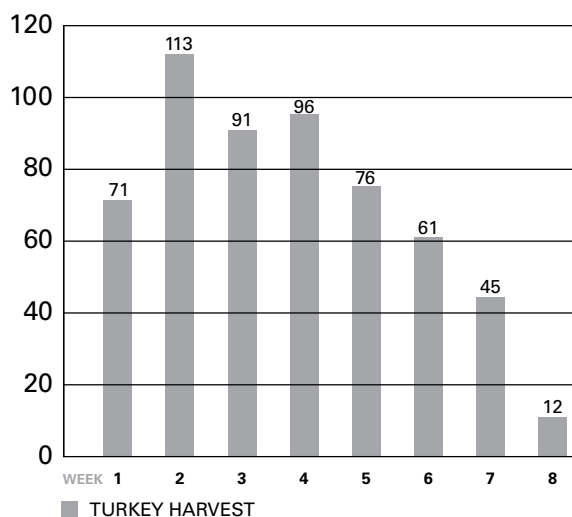
By Thomas E. Harms, WMA Wildlife Biologist

Upper Delta WMA is located in the northerly portions of the Mobile-Tensaw Delta in Baldwin and Mobile Counties, north of Interstate 65. The WMA encompasses approximately 42,451 acres resulting from acquisitions completed by the Forever Wild Program, The Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, Florida Gas and WFF to provide public hunting opportunities. The majority of the WMA lies within the alluvial floodplains of the Mobile-Tensaw Delta with its meandering waterways and interior scattered islands comprised of low perimeter hardwood ridges with interior basins dominated by cypress and tupelo gum. The majority of this WMA is accessible only by boat. A small tract composed of more upland habitats is located in the north Baldwin County section. This portion is accessible by vehicle and consists of loblolly pine plantations currently being restored to longleaf pine. This restoration will provide our wildlife managers a better opportunity to manage these longleaf stands with prescribed fire to provide suitable nesting and brood rearing habitats for wild turkeys. For more information, contact the District V office at 251-626-5474. ♪

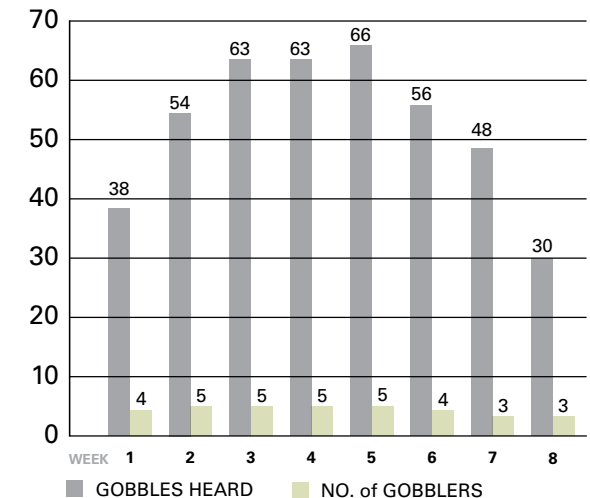
2017 Statewide Harvest and Observations

Cooperators statewide reported hearing 103,303 gobblers and harvesting 565 birds during the 2017 spring turkey season. Statewide harvest intensity was greatest during the first half of the season, with peak harvest activity occurring during weeks two and four.

Spring Season Harvest by Week



Spring Season Gobblers and Gobbles Heard per 10 Hours Hunted by Week



* Harvest numbers compiled from 376 avid hunter survey respondents and represent only a subset of the total harvest within Alabama.

BROOD SURVEY

Reproduction

During the months of July and August, the wild turkey brood survey is conducted across the state by WFF personnel, resource professionals from other state and federal agencies, and interested hunters and landowners. This effort began in 2010. Brood surveys provide information concerning reproduction and are valuable in monitoring turkey population trends. Hens observed with at least one poult are considered successful. Hens without poults are considered unsuccessful. It is assumed they either did not attempt to nest, abandoned their nest, lost their nest to predation or human disturbance or had no poults survive. Average brood size is the total number of poults divided by the number of successful hens and provides an index to poult survival. Poults per hen is defined as the number of poults observed divided by the total number of hens seen. Poults per hen is the most practical reproductive index because it considers successful hens, unsuccessful hens and poult survival.

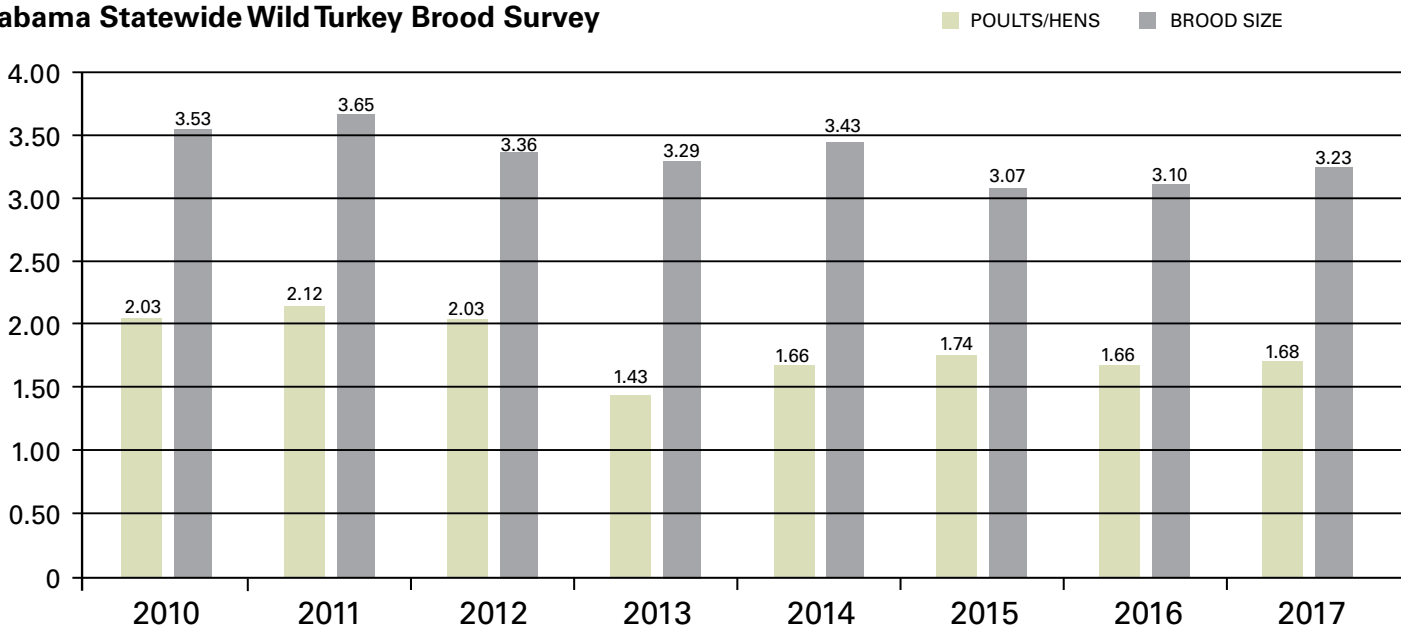
Wildlife biologists typically rate brood survival based on the average number of poults per hen. Recruitment of four or more poults per hen is considered excellent, three is good, two is fair, and one or less poult per hen is poor. While survival of one poult

per hen is poor, researchers contend that as long as hens are successful, a turkey population can be maintained. However, the goal is to optimize conditions through habitat enhancement and other management applications to promote optimal reproductive success and high turkey populations.

Although it is not considered scientific data, results of the brood survey play a critical role in our assessment of turkey populations. Therefore, it is imperative that we receive as accurate data as possible. In order to make a viable estimate of reproduction, we need input from every county in the state. If you have the time and desire to take part in the brood survey we would like to talk with you.

The survey begins July 1st and ends August 31st. During that time, we ask that you record any turkeys you encounter in your normal daily activities. If poults are seen we ask that you provide a size estimate. In addition, we need to know the date and location. Our brood survey packet will provide a guide sheet to assist you in entering your data online. If this is something you are interested in, please contact Steve Barnett at steve.barnett@dcnr.alabama.gov.

Alabama Statewide Wild Turkey Brood Survey



2017

2017 WILD TURKEY BROOD SURVEY OBSERVATIONAL DATA SUMMARY

Observational surveys were conducted during the months of July and August.

	OBSERVATIONS	TURKEYS OBSERVED					POULTS PER HEN	BROOD SIZE	PERCENT OF HENS WITH POUTLS	GOBLER TO HEN RATIO
		GOBBLERS	HENS - Without Poults	HENS - With Poults	POULTS	Unknown				
STATEWIDE	638	487	413	447	1445	141	1.68	3.23	51.98%	1:1.77

DISTRICT 1 TOTALS	179	135	99	151	346	31	1.38	2.29	60.4%	1:1.85
DISTRICT 2 TOTALS	201	143	132	191	657	44	2.03	3.44	59.13%	1:2.26
DISTRICT 3 TOTALS	69	73	48	36	156	12	1.86	4.33	42.86%	1:1.15
DISTRICT 4 TOTALS	151	101	118	59	220	29	1.24	3.73	33.33%	1:1.75
DISTRICT 5 TOTALS	38	35	16	10	66	25	2.54	6.60	38.46%	1:0.74

Piedmont	100	47	68	78	241	7	1.65	3.09	53.42%	1:3.11
Southeastern Plains	380	302	241	224	695	87	1.49	3.10	48.17%	1:1.54
Ridge & Valley	32	52	17	38	104	18	1.89	2.74	69.09%	1:1.06
Southwestern Appalachians	111	78	71	101	388	29	2.26	3.84	58.72%	1:2.21
Interior Plateau	15	8	16	6	17	0	0.77	2.83	27.27%	1:2.75

Hunting Club	28	23	18	15	36	1	1.09	2.40	45.45%	1:1.43
Public	13	6	11	3	29	0	2.07	9.67	21.43	1:2.33
Private	281	150	185	202	621	50	1.60	3.07	52.2%	1:2.58
WMA	293	286	190	202	689	66	1.76	3.41	51.53%	1:1.37
Forever Wild	1	0	0	1	4	0	4.00	4.00	100.0%	-0.00
Special Opportunity Area	5	5	1	3	8	0	2.00	2.67	75.0%	1:0.80
PDHA	7	3	2	0	0	17	0.00	0.00	0.0%	1:0.67
Federal	10	14	6	21	58	7	2.15	2.76	77.78%	1:1.93



JOIN THE AVID TURKEY HUNTER SURVEY TEAM

ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT TURKEY HUNTING?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF TURKEYS IN ALABAMA?

IF YOUR ANSWER IS YES, THEN READ ON.

The Avid Turkey Hunter Survey was initiated in 2014 as a means of collecting long-term data on turkey activity and population numbers. The data collected by cooperators forms the basis for this report. We appreciate all of those who took part and need much more participation. The more hunters that participate the better our data will be. From this dataset, biologists at ADCNR gain valuable information on statewide and regional trends in gobbling activity, hunter effort, harvest rates, age structure and sex ratios. This knowledge ultimately helps ADCNR make decisions that link the interests of sportsmen with management of the state's turkey resource. These decisions directly affect your recreational opportunities as a sportsman and conservationist. The data you collect will provide valuable insight concerning questions such as should the season or bag limit be changed or left the same? Will certain regulations improve or degrade the quality of turkey hunting? These are topics that should be vitally important to the avid turkey hunter.

Participation in this process allows hunters a unique opportunity to directly contribute to the conservation and

management of turkey in Alabama. Participants will receive a copy of "Full Fans & Sharp Spurs," the Alabama Turkey Program annual report that discusses turkey population trends, biology and management in each area of the state.

How Can I Participate?

If you turkey hunt in Alabama you are eligible and encouraged to participate. The only cost to you is a minute or two of your time following every hunt to record information on what you observed. Many hunters keep a hard copy of their data and enter it on our research website at the end of the season, while others enter their data each day.

If you would like to become involved, please contact the ADCNR Turkey Program Biologist listed below or go to www.outdooralabama.com/wild-turkey. Your efforts will assist ADCNR in monitoring Alabama's turkeys to make decisions in the best interest of the resource and the hunters. ♡

For questions or to participate in the survey, please contact:

Steve Barnett, Alabama Turkey Project Leader
steve.barnett@dcnr.alabama.gov



Tes Randle Jolly



GAME CHECK & WILD TURKEYS



Game Check became mandatory for deer and turkey in the 2016-17 seasons. We commend all who lawfully complied with the recording and reporting their harvests. Your participation will enable wildlife biologists with WFF to make better management decisions on your behalf. Harvest data obtained through Game Check provides resource managers with information that was unattainable in the past.

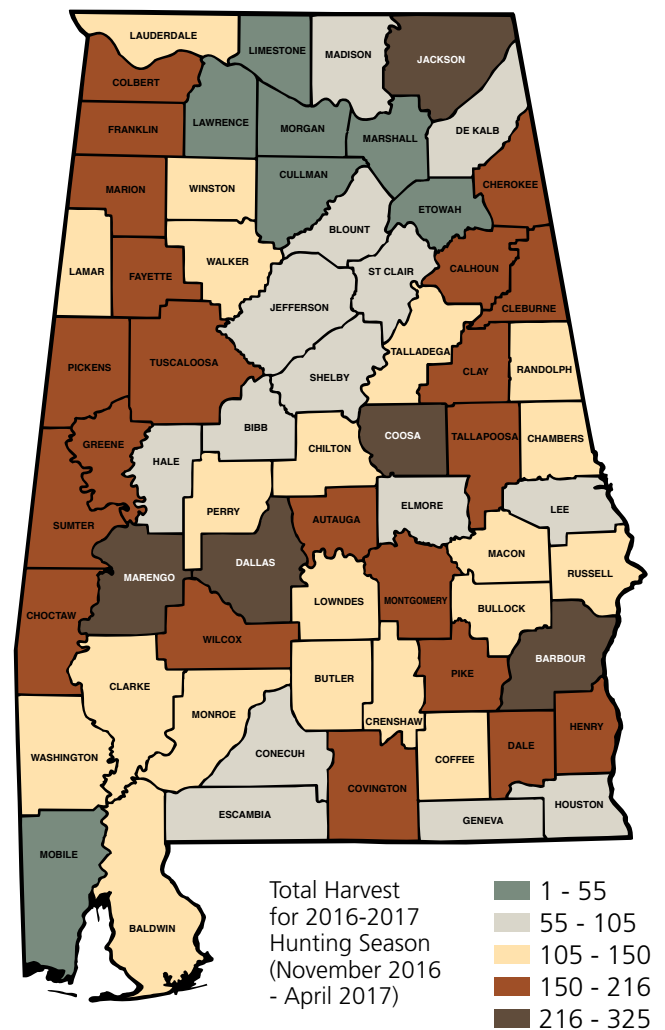
Since 1963 through the present, WFF has conducted an annual hunter harvest mail survey. This survey provides useful information regarding the number of deer and turkey harvested. However, the mail survey samples only licensed hunters which represents < 50 % of the estimated hunting population within Alabama (USFWS National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation 2011). Unfortunately, a better understanding of the state's deer and turkey harvest, and how harvest is distributed across the state and throughout the season is needed to inform management decisions. This incomplete representation of harvest and harvest distribution for deer and turkey can lead to misinformed management decisions that could negatively impact species populations and ultimately hunter dissatisfaction with harvest opportunities.

The new mandatory Game Check allows for harvest data to be obtained from both licensed and license-except hunters for a more accurate representation of harvest statewide. Through Game Check participation, biologists can observe trends in harvests at the county level, statewide, or on specific public landholdings such as wildlife management areas. In addition, Game Check provides data on harvest characteristics such as harvest timing and intensity during a season. Accumulation of more detailed and representative harvest data over multiple seasons will offer biologists a means of targeted management recommendations to ensure healthy and sustainable populations of wild turkeys. For turkey hunters, this translates to more gobbling birds and ample harvest opportunities.

As with any new program, change sometimes can be slow to accept. Our most recent mail survey results reflected a spring turkey harvest of around 30,000 gobblers. The first year of mandatory Game Check resulted in a total of 9,177 turkeys reported. Obviously, compliance is not where it needs to be. However, we are confident that over time as more hunters discover how simple the process is to record and report as well as knowing this information will guide future management decisions, compliance will increase. Please do your part to Game Check and

champion the cause to others! More information about Game Check is on the back cover of this publication and may also be found at www.outdooralabama.com.

2016-2017 Reported Turkey Harvest by County





FIRST HARVEST CERTIFICATE

The Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries First Harvest Certificate program is designed to honor that special moment in which a hunter harvests his/her first gobbler. Certificates are given to provide a way to remember those first special moments in a hunter's lifetime.



CONGRATULATIONS
ON HARVESTING YOUR FIRST GOBBLER



Johnny Smith



March 19, 2015 IN Coosa County

SPUR: 1" BEARD: 9.5" WEIGHT: 19 lbs

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION OF WILDLIFE AND FRESHWATER FISHERIES

If you would like to download a First Harvest certificate, visit www.outdooralabama.com/hunting.



NOTHING HAS CHANGED - OR HAS IT?

By Joel D. Glover, Certified Wildlife Biologist

“I just do not understand it.” The landowner was obviously frustrated. He explained he could not understand why he no longer had wild turkeys on his property. They had been so plentiful before but now he never hears them. He just couldn’t understand since nothing had changed. This wasn’t the first time a landowner had told me nothing had changed on their property through the years. As I prepared to address the comment, I was thinking there is one thing concerning wildlife habitat that will never change and that is, there will always be change. It may happen fast or so slow we do not notice, but it will change.

Change is a characteristic of all natural systems. We refer to this type of predictable change of a plant community over time as succession. Habitat change normally begins with a disturbance to the existing plant community, followed by plant colonization or regrowth, which is referred to as early successional habitat.

Early successional habitats are valuable to many game and non-game species. The plants in these habitats are generally herbaceous annuals and perennials that quickly occupy disturbed sites. They reproduce seeds that are dispersed by wind, water, or animals. Early successional communities are highly productive and allow many species to thrive.

While these habitats contain annual plants that produce an abundance of seeds that are eaten by birds and small mammals, the vast importance of early successional habitat is often overlooked because the untrained eye views the habitat as simply “weeds.” However, many of these weeds and native grasses have great value to wildlife as food and cover. Forbs, legumes, and shrubs in these habitats provide highly nutritious forage for herbivores and browsers. Various ground-nesting birds and other wildlife require early succession habitats for reproduction, and without these habitats they vanish from the landscape. Today, populations of many wildlife species that are dependent on early successional habitats are in decline. This is directly correlated to a lack of early successional habitat. Reports vary but it has been reported that Northern bobwhite populations have dropped from 65 to 80 percent in the past three decades. Although not as severe, Eastern wild turkey reproduction has experienced a decline in the Southeast as measured in poult per hen according to state observation data (refer to observation chart in this report). In addition, analyses of breeding bird survey data gathered since 1965 show declines in most species associated with early successional habitat, such as Red-cockaded woodpecker, Northern bobwhite, and American woodcock.

Like the landowner in this story, the gradual transition from one successional stage to another often lulls landowners into a sense of well-being, thinking their habitat is remaining in the same beneficial state when, in fact, trees are quietly encroaching and replacing the early successional plants. Wildlife managers understand that without continued disturbance the attractiveness and productivity of many wildlife habitats declines as they transition to areas dominated by young trees. Understanding this, managers depend on the resilience of these habitats and employ multiple techniques to manipulate succession to achieve stages beneficial to the wildlife species they are managing for. These techniques range from very simple to complex and many can be put into practice by landowners with a minimal amount of equipment.

A good rule of thumb when it comes to early successional habitat is to take full advantage of what is given to you. Many landowners are fortunate and have property that contains rights of way (ROW) areas that are required to be maintained in early succession. ROW areas often require vegetation be kept low to avoid any interference with overhead lines and so the area can be monitored from the air. Utility companies have transmission and distribution lines that traverse hundreds, sometimes thousands, of miles across all

types of landscapes. These areas encompass millions of acres nationwide. ROW are typically 100 feet or less in width, which in addition to providing early successional habitat, provides great edge beneficial to many species. These areas are normally governed by an easement agreement between the landowner and the utility. As a rule, management that does not include digging or erecting a structure is usually allowed. Landowners should always check with the easement holder before pursuing any activity on an ROW.

For those of us that do not have ROW on their property, early successional habitat can be developed in many other ways. Following below is a brief discussion of the various techniques that promote early successional habitat. However, all techniques aren't applicable everywhere and often using multiple techniques can multiply your results.

STRIP DISKING

The technique I normally recommend more than any other is likely the most simple. Unfortunately, because it is so simple, many folks fail to give it much credence. Lightly disking areas can provide food for wildlife from annual plants that grow in place of the disked perennials. Disking involves use of a rotating blade that disturbs the upper levels of soil to expose rootstalks and rhizomes of plants in the treated area. The effect is to kill or setback perennial vegetation and allow annual plants in the seedbank to emerge.

Many landowners give me a doubtful look when I tell them there are likely seeds in the seedbank that have been there for decades waiting to be set free. While that may be extreme, disking does bring seeds to the surface where they can germinate. I am not advocating plowing up the countryside. Disking the ground three to four inches deep is normally sufficient in areas with thick matting vegetation such as non-native introduced grasses such as fescue. These areas may require

herbicide application to remove these grasses that out compete more beneficial native grasses and forbs. In order to achieve desired results, disking should be performed in January and February. Fall disking will result in a different suite of species. I often recommend disking strips 10 to 20 feet wide along field edges and through open woodlands. One third of the area should be disked each year. Using this rotation, the entire area will be disked every three years.

PRESCRIBED BURNING

Prescribed burning of open fields and pine woodlands can effectively bring vegetation back to an early successional stage at a relatively low cost.

Fire enhances habitat diversity across the landscape by removing forest debris, returning nutrients to the soil, stimulating growth of palatable forage plants, scarifying seeds aiding plant germination, and improving aesthetics. This benefits a wide array of wildlife including small mammals, quail, turkey, deer and many songbirds. The benefits of burning are multiplied when utilized in a pine stand that has been thinned to allow the sunlight to reach the forest floor.

Breaking the targeted burn area into a checkerboard of compartments and burning alternating compartments, each year will enhance diversity and leave undisturbed escape and nesting cover for wildlife adjacent to burned plots. Firebreaks should be created around burn areas to maintain control of prescribed burns.

Although natural and beneficial, prescribed burning is a highly regulated activity and should be handled by a certified burn manager. Each site may require a different type of burn that should be conducted under certain environmental conditions. Most burning is conducted



during the dormant season; however, many sites will benefit from a growing season burn. Once again, burning should be handled by a certified burn manager and requires a permit from the Alabama Forestry Commission.

THINNING

Well managed pine stands can provide good habitat. On soil with a good site index, trees may be ready for thinning as early as 10 or 12 years old. Less productive sites may take 15 or 20 years to be large enough for thinning. Unfortunately, from a food standpoint the wildlife value of a stand of loblolly pine begins to go away after 4 or 5 years as the stand grows and the canopy begins to close. While the area is providing good cover, the lack of sunlight on the ground limits the amount of forage produced. This condition will normally last for several years. In a stand without any management this condition may persist until the stand is harvested. However, this situation does not have to continue. Starting a prescribed burning program as early as possible will help, however a good first thinning will allow the critical ingredient, sunlight, to enter the equation. From a wildlife habitat standpoint, thin the stand

NOTHING HAS CHANGED - OR HAS IT?

as soon as possible and always consult a registered forester before any major timber operation.

Longleaf pine is a different animal all together. Longleaf pine often exhibits a somewhat unorthodox growth pattern. While some of the trees may stay in the grass stage for a few years, other will shoot up. This may result in a stand with trees ranging from 2 to 15 feet high. This growth slows crown closure allowing sunlight to reach the ground and providing good habitat for several years. Unlike loblolly, longleaf should be burned by the time they are two years old if there is enough fuel to carry a fire. Burning will assist trees in getting out of the grass stage and will protect the stand from brown spot needle blight and also stimulate growth of valuable native plants. The longleaf trees should continue to be burned on a regular basis for the life of the stand. Depending on the size of the stand, you may need to divide the tract into compartments and alternate burning them.

CLEARCUTTING

Few people think about clearcutting as a technique to promote early successional habitat, however in reality it does just that. Removing all woody vegetation from a given area of forest allows for the creation of new habitat that can support a wide variety of wildlife and vegetation.

Clearcutting is often the preferred method of a final timber harvest in pine stands within the southeast. Obviously, all forestland will not be converted to permanent early successional habitat however it will likely go through some successional stage, resulting in a habitat change that is proven to increase the number of bird species utilizing the area.

Typically, clearcut areas are site prepared and replanted often within one year of

planting. A normal course of action is to apply herbicide to the area to remove plants that will compete with newly planted trees. The area is then burned to provide a cleaner area to facilitate tree planting. While these treatments often remove all vegetation, they also set the stage for succession to begin anew. Today there are herbicide choices that will prepare the site for planting without completely destroying beneficial wildlife plants. These choices conserve much of the groundcover and encourage key grasses. Before any major forestry operation (especially a timber sale) landowners should consult a registered forester. If wildlife habitat is your primary objective, you should also consult with a wildlife biologist. Forest management and wildlife management go hand in hand, however there are several decisions that need to be made BEFORE you take action.

HERBICIDES

There are often areas where burning is not an option due to nearby highways or residential area etc. In these areas it may be necessary to utilize herbicides. Herbicide application is often the preferred method of removing stubborn introduced grasses and many non-native invasive species. Native plants often have a difficult time competing with these aggressive plants. Today's herbicides are very specific and can be tailored to each situation. Before applying any herbicide, landowners should consult someone knowledgeable in their use to select the proper product and determine the appropriate rate and time of application.

MOWING (BUSH HOGGING)

It is very common to discuss wildlife management techniques with landowners and have them respond by saying they manage their property by bush hogging. While mowing is one of the most common management technique, it is also one

that if not planned properly can do more damage than good. Unfortunately, many grasses begin to grow and start looking like the overgrown fields they are at the same time species are using their cover to hide nests and dens. Mowing areas during the early summer destroys many turkey nests each year. Since much of this mowing is done to enhance the aesthetics of an area, there is often little area left uncut which in many cases renders the area of little value for wildlife. One reason many landowners attack these "weeds" with a vengeance is because of what they are. For several reasons legitimate landowners dislike ragweed, foxtail, beggar weeds, and saw briars. This is unfortunate seeing how these are plants used by a diverse array of wildlife species. Turkeys use these plants for nesting and brood rearing habitat providing food and cover. Before mowing, land managers need to think about the timing and their objective and sometimes it may be best to just park your bushhog.

As outlined above, there are many methods to manage for early successional habitat including disking, mowing, prescribed burns, herbicide use, thinning and clearcutting. Employing these techniques can restore the early successional habitats that so many wildlife species thrive on. Currently early successional habitat is one of the most endangered ecosystems in the United States, and is very important for the survival of many species. Due to the suppression of natural disturbances, resistance to the use of fire and the desire for neat landscapes early successional habitat is largely absent from the landscape and it is important that landowners take an active role in managing these habitats for the variety of plants and animals that inhabit them. The fact is succession is going to occur. You can allow it to occur naturally or you can manipulate it to achieve your objective. The choice is yours. ✎



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WITH WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

By Brian Grice, Wildlife Biologist, Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries

Year after year as hunting season comes and goes, hunters often find themselves looking for answers. Many of the answers they seek are often developed from concerns which arise following countless hours spent hunting that trophy buck or gobbler. For instance, you may wonder why you are not seeing as many turkeys as you use to or why so many of the bucks you are seeing have broken antlers. Regardless, as the season progresses, so do the questions. As you consult friends, family, and numerous websites, you find that the answers can vary as much as the questions; possibly leaving you more confused than when you started. With all this in mind, one question lingers, “Who exactly do I ask?”

The Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries (WFF) receives hundreds, if not thousands, of phone calls every year. These calls cover a broad range of topics, but usually center around nuisance wildlife complaints and wildlife management. Now, that may not seem too surprising. However, most people WFF biologists speak with are genuinely surprised to find out that our agency offers assistance with wildlife management on private properties. In fact, WFF has specifically appointed an entire team of biologists to helping private landowners and land leasers manage their properties for hunting and other recreational wildlife activities. This team is referred to as the Technical Assistance Unit (TAU). The TAU currently consists of eight wildlife biologists distributed throughout the state providing each district with at least one technical assistance contact.

The primary focus of the TAU is to provide local hunters and land managers with practical wildlife management assistance on private lands in a professional and informative manner. Most assistance in Alabama is geared towards white-tailed deer, eastern wild turkey, and mourning dove, however, based on the property’s location and desires of the person seeking assistance, waterfowl may be the focus of all management efforts. General questions, such as “How do I soil test my food plots?” can often be answered over the phone or by email. However, answering questions specific to your property, such as “Why am I not seeing



as many deer?” may require a site visit. Regardless of what the question may be, contacting the technical assistance biologist in your area is the first step towards reaching your objectives.

Now, you may be wondering, “How much do these services cost?” It would not be entirely true to say that it is free although it may appear that way. As the landowner and biologist shake hands and depart from their meeting, no contracts or invoices are signed. Nor will there be a bill received days later requesting payment. These technical assistance services are paid for through hunting license revenue and federal assistance funds generated through the Pittman-Robertson Act. Meaning, when you purchase your hunting license at the beginning of the season, portions of those monies directly support this program and many others allowing for your and others to receive assistance regarding management of wildlife and their habitat.

Therefore, the next time you find yourself looking for answers about wildlife management, no matter how big or small, do not hesitate to contact someone with the TAU. Their goal is to help Alabama’s wildlife managers reach their wildlife management objective. ✓

Craig Scruggs, Alabama State NWTF Chapter President



It has been a whirlwind two years for me as State Chapter President of the NWTF. I have the privilege of working with a wonderful board of directors, technical committee, staff, and Save the Hunt coordinator, each of whom is dedicated to the ideals of our organization. Over the past year, the Alabama NWTF has approved over \$272,000

in funds to support a variety of endeavors, including habitat management, land acquisition and management, JAKES events, and Archery in the Schools, as well as other youth archery programs throughout the state.

We all know how important it is to our society, as well as to the hunting world, to involve young people in a sport or hobby. Teaching them the value of good sportsmanship, stewardship of the land, and conservation of wild game will arm them with a greater sense of worth and responsibility as they grow and mature. The NWTF takes great pride in supporting America's

youth in turkey hunting, and the Alabama Chapter is proud that we can fund many of these endeavors.

Scholarships are another way the NWTF supports young people. This year, the winner of the NWTF National Scholarship is Rachel Hollingsworth of Jacksonville, Alabama. Rachel was one of 25 high school seniors who applied for the state scholarship. We knew Rachel was a worthy contender, and when we were notified that she was the National winner, we sure were proud. Miss Hollingsworth is an excellent student and an avid turkey hunter! We look forward to the convention next February when she takes the stage to accept her award.

There are over 8,000 adult members in the Alabama NWTF. Banquets this year have generated close to \$180,000 which goes into our Super Fund to help fund the projects I mentioned earlier. Without the dedicated members and volunteers who work hard to put on banquets and events, the NWTF would be nothing. When you join the NWTF, you are becoming a part of something much bigger than yourself. You're contributing to an organization that is devoted to the conservation of an American tradition and to our future. Thank you for your interest and commitment to the NWTF. Save the Habitat. Save the Hunt. ♫

Brandon Bobo, NWTF Regional Biologist



After a fourth year into this publication and critical avid turkey hunter's data, we are getting a much more adequate portrayal of the current status of turkey populations in the state, and with the implementation of Alabama's new Game Check system, we are properly positioned to make some huge strides in turkey management for the Heart of Dixie! Native Alabamians and those who venture into the public lands

of Alabama from out of state should take notice of the progress Alabama has made through conservation on the ground, outreach events encouraging people to get outdoors, and research leading to informed decisions about turkey season structure and bag limits for the state.

Just when you thought the Alabama State Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation could not possibly do more, we have exceeded our commitments and contributions to our mission of conserving the wild turkey and preserving our hunting heritage within this great state. Of course none of this could be possible without the unrelenting dedication of our volunteers, members, donors, and committee members. I would also be remised if I did not pay homage to our partners, without whom we would

never accomplish the feats that have been seen throughout the years, such as the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Natural Resources Conservation Services, US Forest Service, Department of Defense, Alabama Forestry Commission, US Fish and Wildlife Services, The Nature Conservancy, The Longleaf Alliance, Alabama Forestry Association, American Forest Foundation, Alabama Cooperative Extension Services, and several others not listed.

Another extension of gratitude belongs to my friends, colleagues and fellow NWTF members, as well as wife and daughter, Ashley and Karlie, who give me the drive to persevere towards the goal of maintaining and restoring healthy ecosystems for the beloved bird we've been blessed with the ability to hunt, thanks to God and our country!

This past spring season was an eye-opening experience to say the least! It was the first season I had to do all of my personal hunting on public land. I must have gotten within 60 yards of at least a half dozen gobblers, and never got a clear shot. On the other hand, I took first-time hunters out on three occasions on some well managed and low pressure private land. Those hunts resulted in longbeards within shooting range on three multiple occasions while hearing 256 gobbles one morning before 10 AM, which was the product of a miss on triple-gobbling birds, but that's a story for another time! Long story short, I learned a lot about how aggressive you can be with movements and calling on public land vs. non-pressured private land. In all scenarios though, I had what I consider successful mornings, whether hearing, seeing or even having watch a miss, and all commonalities of these scenarios was well managed wildlife habitat! ♫

SHOTGUN WINNER



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Kyle Worsham receives a Winchester SXP Turkey Hunter 12 gauge pump shotgun from Alabama National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) State Chapter. Pictured in the photo left to right are Keith Arnett, Scott Brandon, Kyle Worsham, Matt Brock, and Phil Savage. Worsham, an avid turkey hunter from Muscle Shoals, was randomly chosen from all 2017 Avid Turkey Hunter Survey participants.

The ADCNR Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries (WFF) Division Avid Turkey Hunter Survey provides WFF biologists with valuable information on statewide and regional trends in gobbling activity, hunter effort, harvest rates, age structure and sex ratios. This knowledge ultimately helps the WFF make management decisions that link the interests of sportsmen with the wise use of the state's turkey resource. Thank you to all the hunters who participated in the survey and thanks to the Alabama Chapter of the NWTF for their strong support and for supplying the shotgun for the drawing.



ALABAMA'S NWTf OFFICER OF THE YEAR



**Conservation Enforcement
Officer Jeff Shaw**

This year's National Wild Turkey Federation Officer of the Year from Alabama is Senior Conservation Enforcement Officer Jeff Shaw. Jeff is currently assigned to Sumter County in West Alabama.

Officer Shaw began his career as a Conservation Enforcement Officer in 2011. He was first assigned to Marengo County and later transferred to his home in Sumter County. Officer Shaw had previously worked as a Deputy Sheriff in Sumter

County and this experience benefited his Enforcement activities. Since his first year as a Conservation Enforcement Officer, Officer Shaw has made several landowner and hunting club contacts that allowed him to successfully gather information and concentrate his patrol efforts to apprehend violators.

Officer Shaw is an avid and capable outdoorsman. He grew up hunting and fishing with his father, and one of his oldest memories of that is watching his father hunt deer from horseback long before there were any food plots. He has always had a very special love for turkey hunting. His father loved turkey hunting as well and it was something that they always did as one. His father taught him to respect the tradition and sport of turkey hunting, with no tolerance for someone killing a turkey illegally. Officer Shaw's father passed away two years ago, and from that point on he always shares every turkey hunting arrest with him. In his off time, Officer Shaw enjoys wildlife photography. He started photographing squirrels from his bedroom window at the age of 10, and has photographed wildlife for the past 40 years. His photographs have been published in national magazines all over the country, and he has published a wildlife calendar each year for the past 21 years.

Officer Shaw works in one of the largest and most demanding counties for a Conservation Enforcement Officer in District 3. Officer Shaw has worked several calls for assistance ranging from night hunting and permit complaints to nuisance wildlife and alligator complaints. Officer Shaw's arrest record is one of the most impressive in District III. This past deer season he apprehended several violators which include arrests for night hunting, hunting from a public road, hunting by aid of bait, hunting without permission, and issued several other citations and warnings for license, harvest, and hunter orange violations. Officer Shaw is also very effective with his Enforcement of fishing and boating safety laws. He is responsible for patrolling 102 miles of the Tombigbee River in Sumter County to ensure compliance of all State laws. He regularly offers assistance to stranded boaters, and on one occasion this past deer season, he rescued a lost hunter on an island located on the David K. Nelson Wildlife Management Area.

One of the most notable and major arrests for Officer Shaw occurred during the 2017 turkey season. Officer Shaw was checking turkey hunting activity on a club when he observed two hunters run from him by ATV. He gave chase and caught both. They were ticketed for non-resident hunting without license. When they went to the hunting camp, there were several other people there. They all claimed that they were there only to cook and eat crawfish, but Officer Shaw suspected they were there to hunt also. The next morning, Officer Shaw enlisted assistance from Sgt. Goddard and they watched the hunting camp from the woods. They observed more hunters getting ready to leave the camp and go hunting. They stopped two more hunters and ticketed them for non-resident hunting without a license. Officer Shaw made the following turkey hunting related arrests and warnings: three hunting without permission arrests and warnings stemming from landowner complaints; six hunting turkeys by aid of bait; six non-resident hunting without license; and five other hunting related arrests and warnings including assists.

Officer Shaw also investigated 10 Eastern Turkeys being held in possession in a holding pen on property owned by a pay-to-hunt hunting camp. Through his investigation, Officer Shaw discovered that these turkeys were purchased through a bird sale adver-



Tes Randle Jolly

tisement as hybrid Eastern Turkeys, and were not wild Eastern Turkeys. The pay hunting camp owner was planning on releasing them on their property for hunting. Officer Shaw gained cooperation with the owner and curtailed the release of the turkeys with a verbal warning.

Officer Shaw realizes that education and outreach is a major part of having an effective Conservation program. He has been a primary instructor and assisted with several Hunter Education classes since becoming a certified instructor. He has been involved with several outreach programs to include: taught hunting/gun safety to approximately 300 elementary school age students at Safety Days hosted by the University of West Alabama; assisted with kids fishing event at Lake Louise hosted by the University of West Alabama; worked the Law Enforcement display trailer at the 2017 World Deer Expo in Birmingham; regularly speaks to students in local schools and other venues about hunting and fishing education and ethics related to the sport.

He has represented the DCNR and the State of Alabama in a very positive and professional manner while instructing and participating in education and special programs.

Officer Shaw is a member of the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF), the Alabama Conservation Enforcement Officers Association (ACEOA), and the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP). He has the dedication and success that other Conservation Enforcement Officers can look up to. In Officer Shaw's own words "I truly love and respect the wildlife we share this earth with and I thank the Lord for the opportunity to be a Game Warden. My hope is one day at the end of my career I can look back and say I made a difference."

It is obvious Conservation Enforcement Officer Jeff Shaw pursues every aspect of his profession. We are especially thankful for his dogged determination to apprehend those who illegally pursue the wild turkey in Alabama. We are proud to have him represent Alabama at the National NWTF Convention and wish him the best in the national competition. ♡

NWTF HUNTING HERITAGE SUPER FUND AND TAG FUND 2017

This year has once again exceeded the years past in terms of production for conservation on the ground as well as outreach and education for future hunters. As a bit of background regarding the Hunting Heritage Super Fund, these funds are generated through our fundraising events such as banquets, major donor events, gun blasts, etc. It is imperative that our volunteers continue to remain the driving force behind our organization, and it becomes increasingly important to become an active NWTF member in your local chapter if you are not already. For those of you interested in becoming a member please contact one of your local NWTF Regional Directors: Howard Dahlem at hdahlem@nwtf.net (North AL), Tyler Briggs at tbriggs@nwtf.net (Central AL) and Matt Wilkins mwilkins@nwtf.net (South AL).

Of the Super Fund dollars raised every year, the State Chapter earmarks 20% of the total funds towards a land acquisition account. This account is maintained for the specific purpose of handling upfront expenses of newly obtainable lands for due diligence and appraisals. Without the NWTF, ADCNR would likely not be able to make the necessary initiation of the acquisition process, which is a real-life example of how encouraging the partnership between NWTF and ADCNR has become for sportsmen and women in Alabama. We backed our claim by putting those dollars to use this past year to spend \$42,408.06 towards fee-simple purchase of 24 acres on Lauderdale County WMA, as well as ~\$8,000.00 towards the due diligence and appraisals for 362 acres on the new Cedar Creek SOA in Dallas County. For more information on these new and innovative Special Opportunity Areas (SOA), please visit outdooralabama.com.

The Alabama State Chapter of NWTF also has a separate fund dedicated to the accommodation of requests and supplementation of sound habitat enhancement projects on the ground in Alabama, as well as the ability to meet the fiduciary needs of outreach events and educational programs such as Archery in the Schools Programs, mentored hunts, Jake's Days, Women in the Outdoors Events, disabled hunter events among many others. These funds are generated through the sales of NWTF license plates in the state of Alabama, so keep in mind when buying your tag that almost \$50 of the purchase of that custom NWTF tag goes directly towards this account, and thusly, our Initiative to Save the Habitat. Save the Hunt.

In combination of the Super Fund, Land Acquisition Account and Tag Fund, the AL Chapter of NWTF devoted an unprece-



Left to right: Andrew Nix, WFF Forest Management Coordinator; Keith Gauldin, WFF Wildlife Chief; Steve Barnett, WFF Wild Turkey Project Leader; WFF Director Chuck Sykes; and Alabama NWTF Board of Directors members, Craig Scruggs, Craig Harris, and Charlie Duckett.

ded amount of \$414,294.72 towards conservation projects, outreach and education, as well as public land acquisition among various other areas of esteemed funding support. This increase of \$30,473.72 from last year's contributions means we've added almost 10% to funding.

NWTF utilized its abundance of partners nationally and within state boundaries to leverage dollars for the furtherance of our mission of wild turkey conservation and hunting heritage preservation. This past fiscal year of 2017 NWTF in Alabama was provided the initial dollars towards projects that total approximately a staggering \$3.5 million dollars. This means that for every \$1 raised and spent from NWTF, \$11 were leveraged to be utilized for these projects. Keep in mind that this surplus of matching funds was largely in part to the millions of dollars spent on nearly 362 acres of newly accessible public lands. Another way we leverage these dollars is through the Wildlife Restoration Act, more commonly referred to as Pittman-Robertson dollars awarded to AL Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, which allow the obtainment of a 3:1 match generated from licenses, ammunition and firearms sales in the state. NWTF uses these funds to leverage our funds in one regard, while we also utilize other partners such as the US Forest Service on Stewardship Contracts to generate a 4:1 match allowing us to maximize conservation work on National Forests. Other agencies and non-government organizations (NGO's) supply a plethora of matching funds as well. ♡

2017 ALABAMA STATE SUPER FUND EXPENDITURES

SCHOLARSHIPS	21 Local Chapter Scholarships	\$11,750.00
	1 State Scholarship	\$2,500.00
EDUCATION	Alabama's Archery in the Schools Program	\$15,135.00
	National Archery in the Schools Program Alabama state tournament	\$5,000.00
	Tuscaloosa Chapter Outdoor Education materials	\$7,000.00
	Full Fans and Sharp Spurs printing	\$7,362.00
HUNTING HERITAGE	Hunting Heritage Foundation	\$3,000.00
	United States Shooting Sports	\$2,500.00
	National Assembly of Sportsman Caucuses	\$2,000.00
OUTREACH EVENTS	17 Total Outreach Events (Hunts, Jake's Days, etc.) across the state	\$22,888.52
	NWTF Convention AL State Chapter attendance	\$29,684.51
	Becoming an Outdoors Woman Event	\$5,000.00
ALABAMA SUPER FUND PROJECTS - WMAS, SEED SUBSIDY, REWARDS, & RESEARCH	Public Land Purchase appraisals	\$50,358.06
	Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries conservation projects (matched 3:1)	\$43,025.97
	Habitat Equipment for AL Forestry Commission, AL Coop Extension and AL State Lands	\$14,198.14
	Public Land Prescribed Burns (1 total)	\$3,750.00
	Gulf Coastal Plain Ecosystem Partnership (Burn Crew Support)	\$12,500.00
	Pelham Range Seed and Fertilizer	\$4,064.74
	Seed Subsidy Conservation Seed Program	\$36,666.00
REMAINING TAG FUND PROJECTS	Jake's Memberships	
	Outreach Events	
	Habitat Enhancement	
	Archery in the Schools Programs	
	Conservation Seed	
	Mentored Hunt Supplies	
	Administrative (operational expenses)	
	Local chapter committee meetings and incentives	
	District NWTF Biologist Support	
	Mail-out notifications, publications, and printing	
	Total:	\$135,901.78
Total		\$414,294.72



NWTF EXPENDITURES





LICENSE to CONSERVE.

Show your support for the NWTF Save the Habitat. Save the Hunt. initiative by getting your own NWTF Alabama tag.

In the next decade, the National Wild Turkey Federation is committed to:

- conserve or enhance 4 million acres of critical upland habitat
- create 1.5 million hunters
- open access to 500,000 acres for hunting

We are committed to Save the Habitat. Save the Hunt.

www.nwtf.org/alabama

**SAVE THE
HABITAT.
SAVE THE
HUNT.**





Photos by Billy Pope



National Archery in the Schools Program

The NWTF has been a strong supporter of the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) in Alabama for over 10 years. Not only has the Alabama Chapter donated thousands of dollars to this highly worthwhile program, but its members have also participated as volunteers at the annual state tournament. The \$5000 superfund grant pays for facility rental so that registration fees for students can be kept to a minimum.

NASP is designed to teach Olympic-style target archery to 4th-12th grade students. Core content covers archery history, safety, technique, equipment, mental concentration and self-improvement. Students shoot at bull's-eye targets placed in front of an arrow resistant net in their gymnasium. Equipment used is state-of-the-art and designed to fit every student. In addition, there are reading and writing assignments, physics and science projects, history lessons, and other essential scholastic achievements that turn a simple recreational activity into a fun and powerful learning experience. Archery is a life skill that people of all ages and physical abilities can participate in which can lead to better health and self-esteem.

The benefits of the program include much more than learning a new sport. Archery and other shooting sports have a direct benefit to wildlife conservation by way of money generated from the Pittman-Robertson Excise Tax applied to archery equipment. Many of the participants, their friends and families go on to become lifelong archers and lifelong

contributors to wildlife conservation through the purchase of equipment.

Alabama was the second state to implement the curriculum into the public-school system. Over 400 schools have purchased equipment and are conducting the program as part of the physical education curriculum. With a conservative estimate of just 150 children per school at 400 schools means approximately 60,000 Alabama school children are being exposed to archery programming each year. New schools enroll in the program continuously and we receive daily requests for information regarding the program from teachers, parents and schools.

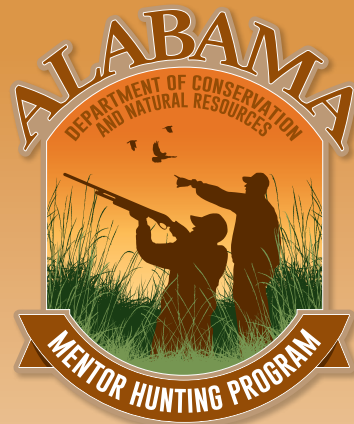
This program culminates each school year with a state championship. We have grown from 200 youth attending the first state championship in 2004 to over 1240 participating in 2016. Due to the popularity of the program and limited space at the venue, we began holding regional events to qualify for state. Last year we conducted nine regional events where almost 4100 students attempted to qualify for the state championship. 20 Alabama schools from the state tournament advanced to the national event in Kentucky last year.

Next year's event will be held on April 6, 2018. Roughly 2000 people will attend the state event including students, teachers, parents, volunteers and spectators. And once again, we hope NWTF will be a Platinum Sponsor of this popular event. ✎

BECOME A HUNTING MENTOR

HAVE YOU EVER
INTRODUCED
SOMEONE
TO HUNTING?

Teaching someone the skills they need to be a successful hunter and cultivate a lifelong passion for the outdoors can be very rewarding. The future of hunting in America depends on you.



Takem' hunting!

Become a hunting mentor and *"Takem' hunting!"*



Learn more about the mentor hunting program by visiting OutdoorAlabama.com or contact Justin Grider at justin.grider@dcnr.alabama.gov or 205-339-5716.

SAVE THE HABITAT. SAVE THE HUNT.



The NWTF is fervently continuing its plan to save the habitat and save the hunt. This is an exciting time in our organization, as we are now all moving towards a goal. When all staff, volunteers, and partners work together towards a common goal, we can be much more efficient with our efforts. This initiative quantifies what we are going to accomplish as an organization across North America over the next several years. These common goals are as follows:

- Conserve or enhance at least 4 million acres of upland habitat.
- Create hunting access on at least 500,000 acres of new available lands.

- Create 1.5 million new hunters through outreach and legislation.

The following list of accomplishments should motivate any avid turkey hunter, volunteer, or just outdoor enthusiast to get involved and on-board with NWTF in its initiative to Save the Habitat. Save the Hunt. With help from volunteers as well agency and organization partnerships, we have been able to boast an overabundance of accomplishments towards the Save the Habitat. Save the Hunt. Initiative in 2017 as follows:

Alabama Save the Habitat. Save the Hunt. 2017 Accomplishments

PROJECT NAME	CONSERVED ACRES	ACCESS ACRES	AL CHAPTER NWTF DOLLARS	PROJECT MATCH DOLLARS
Public Land Project				
Take 5 Thinning - Longleaf planting	176	0	\$-	\$50,396.00
Big Escambia Drum Chopping	100	0	\$-	\$7,500.00
Big Escambia Longleaf Restoration	133	0	\$-	\$32,000.00
TNC Burn Crew	32609	0	\$18,400.00	\$184,000.00
GCPEP Burn Crew	6952	0	\$12,500.00	\$262,500.00
Private Landowner Shortleaf Planting	88	0	\$-	\$23,716.00
Hollins WMA Rx Fire	302	0		\$129,077.91
Coosa WMA Rx Fire	382	0	\$43,025.97	
Fred T Stimpson WMA Rx Fire	819	0		
Chocolocco WMA Rx Fire	458	0		
Lauderdale WMA Acquisition	29	29	\$42,408.06	
Cedar Creek Acquisition	362	362	\$7,850.00	\$995,500.00
CSP and Seed Subsidy				
Chufa Sales	684	0	\$36,666.00	\$36,666.00
Seed Subsidy Mixes	390	0		
Conservation Seed	20,181	0		
Totals:	63665	391	\$160,850.03	\$1,721,355.91



WILD TURKEY – A STRUGGLE TO SURVIVE

By Adam Pritchett, Wildlife Biologist, Alabama Division of Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries

There has never been more interest in the sport of turkey hunting than now. With an increase in hunting interest comes an inherent interest in wild turkey population levels. As hunters, we want population levels to be as high as possible so that we have more birds to pursue. That doesn't necessarily mean that we're going to harvest more birds, but that the opportunity to do so is there. Before anyone starts out on a mission to try to have a turkey sitting on every limb on their property, they need to realize the obstacles that turkeys face every day to just survive.

From the moment a turkey enters the world, as an embryo in an egg, predators are in pursuit of it. As a turkey hatches from the egg and grows from a poult to an adult, the number of predators able to capture it decreases.

So, as you would expect, a turkey's survival rate increases with age. There are basically 3 types of predators that influence turkey survival: nest predators, predators that can capture and kill poults, and predators that can capture and kill adult turkeys. Nest predators are the largest group and consist of snakes, rodents, crows, skunks, raccoons, opossums, armadillos, domestic and feral dogs, coyotes, foxes, feral hogs, and black bears. Most nest predation is incidental, predators are not actively searching for turkey eggs but often encounter nests opportunistically. Research has indicated that incidental predation by raccoons and foxes have the largest effect on nesting success. Areas with high populations of feral hogs often see high rates of incidental nest predation and can also experience low nesting success.

The second group of turkey predators are those that prey on turkey poults. This group consists of hawks, owls, eagles, feral cats, bobcats, foxes, feral and domestic dogs, and coyotes. A hen

turkey lays an average clutch size of 10 eggs. If a hen has a successful nest, at least half of the poults die within the first 2 weeks of hatching. Poults have a high predation rate and low survival until the point at which they can fly and roost in a tree at night. This usually occurs at 10-14 days after hatching. Predation rates on adult hens with poults also increases during the time when poults are flightless. Typically, hens roost on the ground overnight with the poults until they too can fly up to roost in trees, which puts the hen at a higher risk of encountering predators.



Bill Summerour

The third group of predators is those that prey on adult turkeys. This list is much shorter and includes coyotes, feral and domestic dogs, bobcats, eagles, and humans. As previously mentioned, the majority of predation that occurs on adult turkeys is on hens during the nesting and brood rearing periods. An adult turkey has keen eyesight and excellent hearing that really puts a predator at a disadvantage. Contrary to what many people think, a coyote will rarely be able to capture an adult turkey. Adult male turkeys highest risk of predation and lowest chance for survival is during the annual turkey hunting season.



Pete Dobbs

For land managers that are interested in increasing their turkey population, predator control alone is just not an effective way to address the problem. Predator control can be very costly and time consuming. To be an effective management tool, predator removal must be done on a broad scale and must target multiple predator species and be performed on a continual basis. Predator control should be used in conjunction with sound habitat management practices to have the largest benefit to local turkey populations. As previously stated, most predators don't exclusively hunt turkeys and most predation is due to incidental contact. Thus, the best option would be reduce the occurrence of predator encounters by increasing the amount of high quality

habitat available to turkeys. High quality turkey habitat is characterized by a high percentage of the property having low vegetation with high quality grasses, forbs and legumes that provide good plant foraging and hold high insect populations that are needed for bugging. These habitats need to be open enough for turkeys to be able to detect predators and have mid-story trees to provide some overhead cover from avian predators. Canopy level trees are needed to provide roosting opportunities and some of those should be mast producing trees such as oaks and beech. The reason behind the need for high quality habitat is because turkeys will more likely flourish where hard and soft mast trees as well as grasses and forbs are abundant. If only a small amount of nesting and brood rearing habitat exists on a property then predators quickly learn where to look for an easy meal. Habitat improvement practices such as timber thinning operations, mulching, prescribed burning, selective herbicide use, and food plot planting should all be incorporated as needed to provide the highest quality habitat for turkeys.

In the end, it boils down to that fact that hunters and land managers must realize there are many predators that are looking for an opportunistic meal of wild turkey. This predator-prey relationship is as old as the species themselves. Unless extremely high levels of predators are present or new predator species are introduced into an area then predator removal is often an ineffective way to increase turkey populations. Providing adequate amounts of the highest quality habitats will always be the best way to improve a turkey's chance in their struggle to survive. ✧



Tes Randle Jolly



TURKEY RESEARCH PROJECT UPDATE FROM THE ALABAMA COOPERATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE RESEARCH UNIT

James B. Grand, U.S. Geological Survey, Cooperative Research Units, Dadeville, Alabama, barry_grand@usgs.gov

Prepared: November 15, 2017

This was the third year of a five-year project aimed at estimating the survival and productivity of turkey populations in Alabama, and we are starting to produce results. Since January of 2015, the staff, students, and technicians on the project monitored the survival and productivity of over 295 turkeys on the four study areas in Clarke, Bibb and Hale, Barbour and Bullock, and Jackson counties.

They attempted to locate every marked bird and determine whether it was alive every two weeks, and in August they attempted to determine the number of poults produced by each marked hen. Beginning in March and extending through May, we conducted gobble surveys to estimate the distribution and abundance of adult male turkeys. Although we discontinued the winter game camera survey because very few turkeys were seen, we performed surveys at the end of the breeding season in July to estimate the size and productivity of the turkey population. The roadside surveys in July and August also were discontinued because they failed to produce enough observations of turkeys to be reliable.

One of the project-supported, Auburn University graduate students finished his thesis this year, and another is expected to finish in early 2018. Matt Gonnerman's thesis describes his analysis of gobble count surveys and approximately 400,000 images collected using game cameras during July and August of 2015 and 2016. Matt examined the factors that influenced gobbling activity and the use of wildlife openings in spring. He also estimated the density of turkeys on each study area and poult-per-hen ratios, one measure of turkey productivity. Matt's results



will soon be submitted for additional review and publication in scientific journals. We will summarize them here in future articles after they are published. The second graduate student, Steve Zenas, is working on estimates of turkey survival rates, and his thesis should be available in a few months.

As often is the case when conducting research, we have more questions that need to be addressed. Are the turkey surveys conducted on wildlife openings representative of the entire



Captured turkey outfitted with a leg band and backpack radio transmitter, released during an active trapping session on the study areas.

population? Is it necessary to use bait for game camera surveys? How does bait influence the density and habitat use turkeys? Can automated methods be developed to analyze images from game camera surveys? Will we be able to detect an effect of the changes to spring turkey seasons in surveys? These are some of the questions that the next trio of graduate students will attempt to answer during the remaining 2 years of the project.

This year, in anticipation of having final estimates of survival and production, as well as better methods for estimating turkey populations, we initiated a collaborative project with the Pennsylvania Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, Pennsylvania Game and Fish Commission, and North Carolina State University (NCSU). Researchers and agency biologists in Alabama and Pennsylvania are interested in developing a system for helping agencies in both states to make better-informed recommenda-

tions about seasons and bag limits. A team from each state met with faculty from NCSU to develop a prototype for using the research results and surveys to manage turkey populations for the greatest benefit to stakeholders in each state. The Pennsylvania and Alabama Chapters of the National Wild Turkey Federation are helping to fund this effort, and we are hoping to receive additional funds from the national organization. For more information about this research project, contact me, Steve Barnett, or the District Biologist in your area. ✎

Wild Turkey Disease Mortality Form

The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) is interested in documenting Wild Turkey Mortality caused by disease. Monitoring this mortality will provide information to assess the impacts of disease and help better manage the wild turkey resource. Sportsmen can play an important role by reporting sick or dead turkeys and assisting the ADCNR with obtaining birds for examination.

If you find any sick or dead wild turkey, please follow the procedures listed below. If you are unable to collect the carcass, reporting details about the dead birds will provide valuable information. Also, please contact the ADCNR if you observe or have previously observed a sharp decline in a local turkey population.

HANDLING TURKEYS: Sick turkeys should be reported to ADCNR Wildlife and Freshwater staff. Fresh carcasses of dead wild turkeys should be cooled as soon as possible by refrigeration or by putting the bird on ice in a cooler (it is best not to freeze the turkey). Submit the bird as soon as possible. However, if the turkey cannot be turned in to the ADCNR within 48 hours, it can be frozen as long as necessary.

CONTACTING THE ADCNR: Contact Turkey Project Leader Steve Barnett at 251-626-5474 as soon as possible. If you are unable to contact Steve Barnett, please call the Montgomery office at 334-242-3469 or your local ADCNR Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries District Office. Numbers are available on page 6.

RECORDING INFORMATION: Please record the following information and submit this form with the turkey.

Name: _____

Address: _____

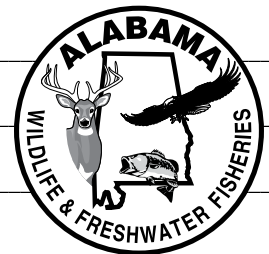
Phone: _____ Email: _____

Date turkey was found: _____ / _____ / _____

Location: (property, road, county, town) or GPS coordinates: _____

Description of turkey when found: _____

Additional Comments: _____







GAME CHECK IS MANDATORY

All hunters are required to participate in Game Check, which will help the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources effectively manage wildlife for generations to come.

**HARVEST DATA
IS CRITICAL FOR
EFFECTIVE WILDLIFE
MANAGEMENT**

**TAKE THE
TIME OR
PAY THE
FINE!**

THE EASIEST WAYS TO
CHECK YOUR HARVEST

1. Outdoor Alabama App
2. OutdoorAlabama.com/gamecheck

