



A L A B A M A

# Full Fans & Sharp Spurs



## WILD TURKEY REPORT 2014

Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources





## 2014 ALABAMA WILD TURKEY REPORT

Welcome to *Full Fans & Sharp Spurs*, the first wild turkey program report prepared by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' (ADCNR) Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division (WFF). This report, which we plan to produce annually, provides turkey hunters and others with information concerning Alabama's wild turkey resource. The report contains biological and sociological data used by the WFF to monitor and manage the state's turkey population.

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

**Cover Photo:** Tes Randle Jolly



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division (WFF) is pleased to share the first edition of our Wild Turkey Program Report, *Full Fans & Sharp Spurs*. In these pages, you will find the 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 will reveal trends in our wild turkey population over time. We hope you enjoy this report and extend you an invitation to assist us in collecting this data. You will find directions on how you can assist on page 28.

This publication is a joint venture with the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf). As you will see, the 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 members of the Alabama Wild Turkey Committee, which you will meet in these pages. In addition, Acting Wildlife Chief Ray Metzler and Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' Information Technology and Information and Education staffs were integral parts of the process.

We trust that Dave Godwin and Adam Butler of the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks believe that imitation is the most sincere form of flattery since we copied the outline of their fine publication. We appreciate their assistance and encouragement.

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.

Thank you all.

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**Robert Bentley** – *Governor*

The majestic Eastern wild turkey has always been a treasured part of the outdoors experience in our great state. Through the efforts of the Alabama Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division, this first Full Fans & Sharp Spurs publication will keep the public informed about this valuable natural resource.

The wild turkey is such an asset to our state that we continue to hold the Alabama Governor's One-Shot Turkey Hunt each spring to showcase this great bird and the wide variety of natural resources available in Alabama. Not only do the invited participants get to enjoy a great time in Alabama's outdoors, they also get to experience our abundant Southern hospitality.



**N. Gunter Guy, Jr.** – *Commissioner, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources*

As an avid turkey hunter myself, I am pleased to help unveil the inaugural edition of *Full Fans & Sharp Spurs* to highlight the importance of the Eastern wild turkey to the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and hunters in Alabama.

As one of the premier big-game species in Alabama, the wild turkey is worthy of this special effort by the Alabama Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division to gather as much information as possible to ensure Alabama hunters are able to pursue this magnificent bird for generations to come.

I hope you enjoy this publication and get out and enjoy Alabama's great outdoors this year.



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

It's been a long time in the making, but the first edition of "*Full Fans & Sharp Spurs*" has been completed. I would like to thank Steve Barnett and Joel Glover for spearheading this project. I would also like to thank all the members of the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries turkey committee for their hard work and dedication in managing this incredible bird. A very special thanks goes to the Alabama State Chapter of the NWTF for their support of turkey conservation and turkey hunters. This publication has been many years in the making and could not have been accomplished without the assistance of our staff, NGO partners, and especially Alabama turkey hunters. We hope this report sheds valuable light on the research projects we are conducting and the status of our wild turkey population. The participation of Alabama's turkey hunters is essential for this effort to be successful. The more data we receive the better job we will be able to do. Good luck this spring in the turkey woods and hopefully your ears will be filled with gobbles and your game bag with full fans and sharp spurs!





NWTF



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# WILDLIFE AND FRESHWATER FISHERIES TURKEY COMMITTEE – *Formed 2014*



Alabamians have enjoyed a healthy wild turkey population for decades. Through trapping and relocation, the 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 planned Wild Turkey Research Project on a scale never attempted in Alabama. We will be 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 insure the maximum sustainable wild turkey population to be enjoyed by future generations.

## Alabama Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries – District Offices



### **District 1**

21453 Harris Station Road  
Tanner, AL 35671  
256-353-2634  
dcnr.d1wff@dcnr.alabama.gov



### **District 2**

4101 Alabama Hwy. 21 N.  
Jacksonville, AL 36265  
256-435-5422  
dcnr.d2wff@dcnr.alabama.gov



### **District 3**

8211 McFarland Blvd., West  
P.O. Box 305  
Northport, AL 35476  
205-339-5716 (*Northport*)  
334-289-8030 (*Demopolis*)  
dcnr.d3wff@dcnr.alabama.gov



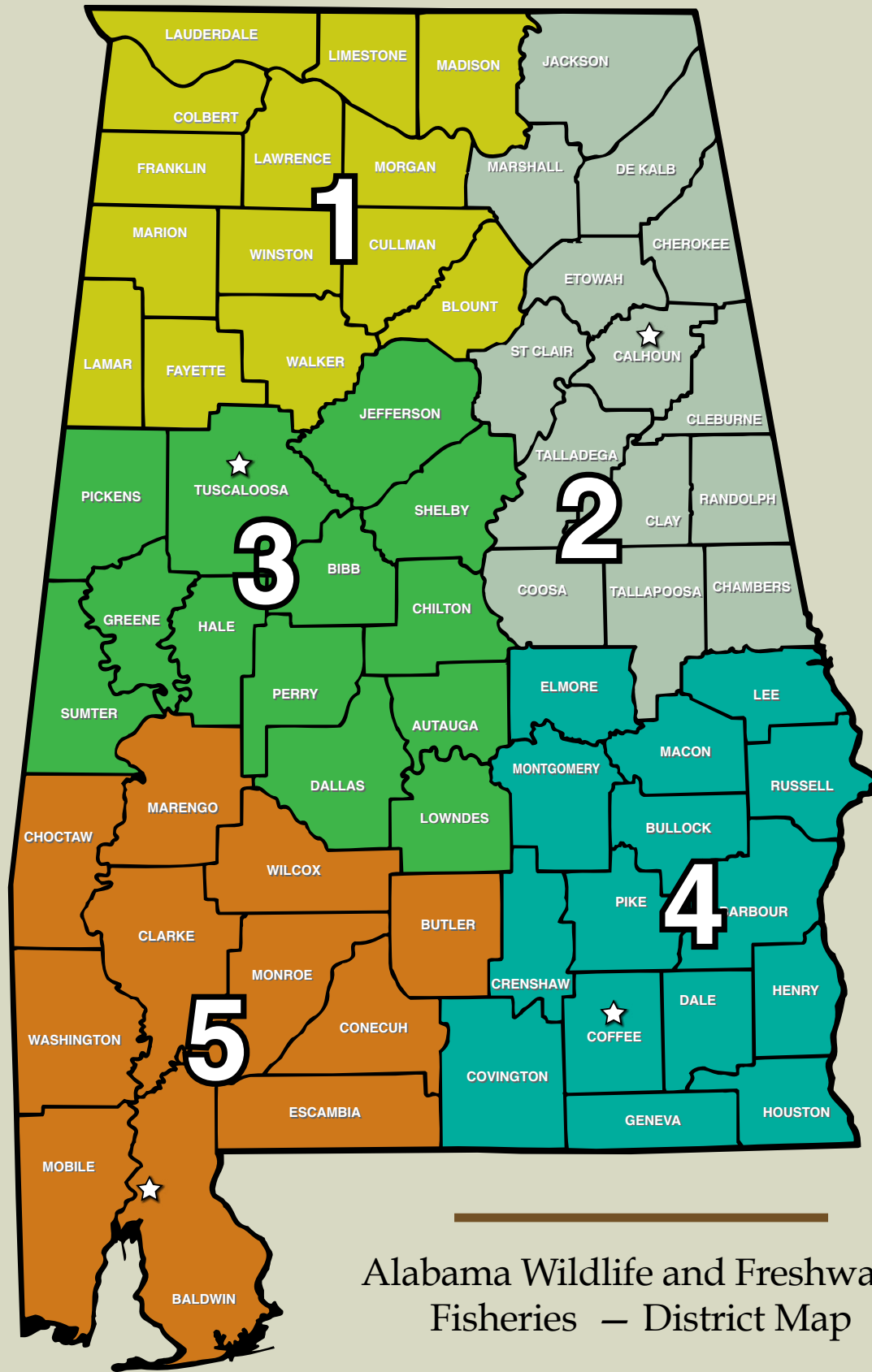
### **District 4**

3520 Plaza Drive  
Enterprise, AL 36330  
334-347-9467  
dcnr.d4wff@dcnr.alabama.gov



### **District 5**

30571 Five Rivers Blvd.  
Spanish Fort, AL 36527  
251-626-5153  
dcnr.d5wff@dcnr.alabama.gov



Alabama Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries – District Map



## COMMITTEE MEMBERS



*District 1 Representative*

**Matt Brock**



Matt Brock from Fayette Alabama is an avid wild turkey and white-tailed deer hunter, but enjoys a few days of small game hunting each year. He began hunting at a very young age, and has always had a personal love for the outdoors and the recreational opportunities it offers. He has hunted turkeys since the age of 15, when he killed his very first bird on his birthday. The few days leading up to that first successful hunt started a love for pursuing turkeys that cannot be extinguished.

After obtaining a B.S. degree in Wildlife Science from Mississippi State University in 2007, he began employment as a Regional Wildlife Biologist with the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks. He assisted with and coordinated habitat management activities on

private and public lands. In early 2011, he began restoring and managing longleaf pine ecosystems in Alabama and Mississippi through the Longleaf Pine Initiative, working through the NWTf and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

In December 2011, he joined the WFF as a Wildlife Biologist on Black Warrior Wildlife Management Area (WMA). He currently manages Black Warrior WMA, Sam R. Murphy WMA, and the Fayette Physically Disabled Hunting Area. He 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. He resides in Winston County with his wonderful wife, Kerin, and their two children, Luke and John.



*District 2 Representative*

**Joel D. Glover**



Joel D. Glover is a Certified Wildlife Biologist® and has been employed by the WFF for over 28 years. Joel served as the area biologist on the Coosa Wildlife Management Area for over 17 years and currently serves as the Regional Private Lands Biologist for Central Alabama.

Joel received a B.S. degree in Environmental Biology from the University of North Alabama and M.S. degree in Wildlife Ecology from Mississippi State University. His expertise is in habitat management for multiple species.

He currently serves on the Outreach and TREASURE Forest Committees of the Alabama Natural Resource Council. He has worked extensively with the TREASURE Forest pro-

gram across the state. He is currently the state assistant turkey project leader and serves as a member of the National Wild Turkey Federation Technical Committee.

Joel enjoys writing human interest and wildlife articles and nature photography. His articles and photos have appeared in numerous publications. He has authored numerous articles concerning his passion, turkey hunting. He believes anyone who has never heard a gobbler split the morning calm has missed out on one of life's true blessings. He serves as a deacon at Rockford Baptist Church and is an avid turkey hunter. He and his wife live in Rockford in Coosa County. He has two grown sons.





*District 3 Representative*

**Justin Brock**



Justin Brock was born in Gadsden, Ala. and grew up on Lookout Mountain in Sand Rock, Ala., located in Cherokee County. He began hunting deer and turkey at a young age on his grandfather's farm and developed a love for the outdoors.

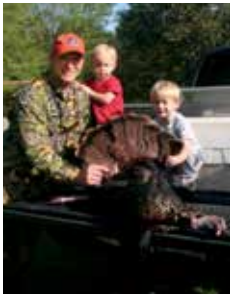
He graduated from Auburn University in 2008 with a B.S. in Wildlife Science and Fisheries and a degree in Fisheries and Allied Aquaculture. At Auburn, Justin served as the vice president of the student chapter of the Wildlife Society, assisted with deer research projects, and worked at the U.S.D.A. Aquatic Animal Health Research Unit

where he assisted with nutrition studies on catfish and tilapia. After graduation, he started working for the WFF on the David K. Nelson Wildlife Management Area in Demopolis, Ala. as an Area Biologist. Justin currently serves on the Alabama Wild Turkey Management Committee and is proud to help steer the direction of turkey management decisions in Alabama. It is his hope that he can make a positive contribution to the state's turkey populations so that future generations will be able to take their children out and enjoy hunting the way he did and does with his children.



*District 4 Representative*

**Adam Pritchett**



Adam Pritchett is a wildlife biologist for the WFF who earned his B.S. degree in Wildlife Sciences from Auburn University in 2002. He began his career with WFF in 2005 at Barbour Wildlife Management Area. His primary responsibility is managing the 29,000-acre WMA to enhance habitat for wildlife populations and to provide quality hunting experiences for all types of hunters. He also provides technical assistance to landowners for managing the wildlife on their property.

Adam has been a fanatical turkey hunter for 14 years and looks forward to serving on the turkey committee to ensure that future generations can experience the excitement of turkey hunting in Alabama. Adam began hunting and fishing at a young age, and is particularly fond of spending time teaching his two sons how to hunt and fish.



*District 5 Representative*

**Steve Barnett**



Steve Barnett received a B.S. in Wildlife Management from Auburn University in 1984. He held research assistant positions at Auburn University on wild turkey and quail studies following graduation. Steve began his career with the WFF in 1986 as an Area Wildlife Biologist in Washington County. In 1999, Steve transferred to Baldwin County as an Assistant District Supervisor and Area Wildlife Biologist. He was promoted to Supervising District Biologist in an eleven county region of southwest Alabama in 2012.

He serves as the Wild Turkey Project Leader for the Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries. Steve also serves on the Technical Committee for the NWTf and the Southeast

Wild Turkey Working Group. Steve and his wife Victoria co-authored a book, *The Wild Turkey in Alabama*, in 2009.

He enjoys hunting and fishing and is obsessed with the challenge of pursuing old gobblers. Steve has chased turkeys for close to 40 years in hunts across the U.S. and in Mexico. Steve is active in his local church where he sings in the choir. He and his wife share their love of the outdoors with daughter Elizabeth and son Jacob. Steve and his family live in Bay Minette, Ala. "I feel privileged to serve on Alabama's Wild Turkey Management Committee. It is exciting to be part of a team whose common goal is the betterment of wild turkeys in Alabama."

# WILD TURKEY HISTORY IN ALABAMA

By the early 1900s, wild turkey numbers in Alabama had dwindled to around 10,000 birds statewide due to market hunting, illegal take and loss of habitat. Conservation minded visionaries including hunters, landowners, and conservation leaders in cooperation with the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division (WFF) led the charge to develop a conservation model to turn the decline around. Research directed toward restocking wild turkeys in the state was launched in Clarke County at the Salt Springs Game Sanctuary (now the Fred T. Stimpson Community Hunting Area) in the early 1940s. Since state wildlife agencies were just beginning an effort to restock populations, methods to achieve the desired results of repopulating wild turkeys throughout the state were unclear. Through trial and error, WFF first began restoration efforts by propagating wild turkeys that would be used for release on potential range. Wild turkeys were trapped on the Salt Springs Sanctuary, pinioned so they could not fly and placed in a specially designed pen facility on 80 acres. The idea was that poults raised by hens on the site would be released on unoccupied range. However, it was soon discovered that a high fence could not hold even pinioned birds. Trapping and relocating wild turkeys in each stocking attempt was the key to success. The road to Alabama's successful restoration efforts began in September 1943 when eight wild turkeys were trapped at the Salt Springs Sanctuary and relocated to the Ted Joy Preserve in Jefferson County.

Many states, including Alabama, experimented with pen-raising "domestic" wild turkeys, and like in all other states, "turkey farming" as a means of restoration was a complete failure. The pen-raised restocking project taught us there are no shortcuts

or quick-fix approaches to wildlife restoration. Fortunately, this effort was discontinued and no long-term, widespread problems relating to diseases or parasites introduced from domestic to wild turkeys were discovered. To guard against the spread of diseases and parasites, a regulation is in place in Alabama prohibiting the release of any turkey (domestic or wild) that originated from outside the state or within the state into the wild.



NWTF

Cannon net being deployed

One of the first trapping techniques used was the pole trap that consisted of open-spaced small logs placed horizontally to form a box shape with some type of funnel design that served as a door for turkeys to enter. The top was left open during pre-baiting and covered with netting during trapping attempts. Although not very effective, the pole trap could be set and left unattended and checked once each day. The second turkey trap design developed was the net or drop-door

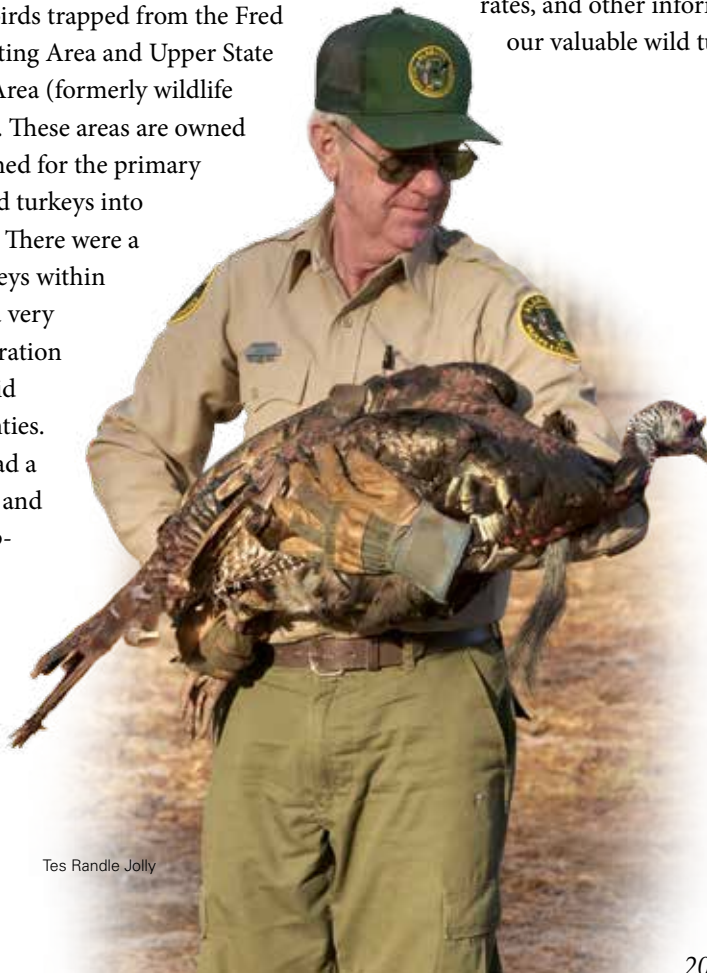
trap. This trapping technique proved to be much more effective than the pole trap partly because the opening (door) provided a more natural setting due to a large (12-foot-wide) entrance for turkeys to freely travel to and from the bait site. The sides and top were constructed using mesh wire or netting to form a box shape. The trap door consisted of mesh netting rolled up on a pole to the top of the opening and held in place by a simple trigger mechanism. A well-concealed trapper would pull the latch to trap turkeys on the bait. One of the major disadvantages of both the pole and drop-door traps was their fixed positions. These designs were not portable, so the trapper could not easily move the traps as turkey foraging habits changed. The third trapping technique developed and still in use by WFF personnel is the cannon net. The cannon net trap consists of a 30- by 60-foot nylon net that is shot over turkeys feeding at a pre-baited site. When properly deployed, the net will spread over the turkeys

at the bait site. Following successful deployment of the net, the trapper and other assisting personnel remove turkeys from the net to collect data and place the turkeys in transport boxes if relocation to other areas is the objective. The major advantage of the cannon net is portability, being able to move the trapping equipment as turkey movement patterns change. In addition, the cannon net setup offers complete concealment. The net, cannons and other components are completely camouflaged, which over the years has proven to be very effective in trapping the wary wild turkey.

In Alabama, waterproof cardboard turkey transport boxes provided by the NWTf are used in restoration efforts. Biological data are collected from each captured wild turkey. Additionally, all turkeys are marked with at least a leg band that identifies each individual. Following data collection, the turkeys are placed in transport boxes in preparation for relocation. Few in-state releases occur now because most suitable habitat is occupied by wild turkeys. Alabama has trapped turkeys for other states to assist in restoration efforts while being provided replacement cost dollars to fund public land acquisition. Turkey trapping is still conducted in conjunction with surveys and research in the state.

Most of the wild turkeys that we enjoy in Alabama today originated from stockings of birds trapped from the Fred T. Stimpson Community Hunting Area and Upper State Physically Disabled Hunting Area (formerly wildlife sanctuaries) in Clarke County. These areas are owned by the WFF and were established for the primary purpose of restocking deer and turkeys into unoccupied range in the state. There were a few other sources of wild turkeys within the state, but those represent a very small percentage of total restoration efforts. Wild turkey releases did not occur in 21 Alabama counties. Most of these counties have had a history of good turkey habitat and consequently good turkey populations, so stocking was not necessary. To date, 1,936 wild turkeys have been trapped at these sites in Clarke County and restocked in 46 Alabama counties.

The estimated Eastern wild turkey population in Alabama is approximately 400,000 to 450,000 birds (2015). It must be emphasized that this number is only an estimate and is not based on a precise count. WFF biologists have been estimating turkey numbers in their regions based on various land classifications and their knowledge of habitat quality, brood rearing success and other factors. The average number of turkeys per square mile is approximated at the county level. Wild turkey populations, like most wildlife populations, are cyclic and total numbers can vary greatly from year to year. Most of the year-to-year fluctuations are based on brood rearing success. This determines the number of new individuals that will enter the fall population. Several consecutive successful brood rearing seasons can dramatically increase the total population over time. The reverse is true in poor brood rearing years. Although other factors are involved, most wildlife biologists feel that populations are driven by the quality of the habitat. Like many southeastern states, Alabama has observed a decline in statewide reproduction in recent years. This recent trend has prompted the Alabama Wild Turkey Committee, in cooperation with the Alabama Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at Auburn University, to launch a comprehensive wild turkey project starting in 2015. The objective is to better determine survival, recruitment, harvest rates, and other information to improve the management of our valuable wild turkey resource. ✓



Tes Randle Jolly

Fred Pringle holds a turkey captured for restocking purposes. Most of the wild turkeys in Alabama today originated from stockings of birds trapped from former wildlife sanctuaries in Clarke County.





# ALABAMA TURKEY SURVEYS

## ALABAMA AVID TURKEY HUNTER SURVEY

The Alabama Avid Turkey Hunter Survey was initiated in 2014 to provide the WFF with biological information about the wild turkey population in the state. Cooperating hunters were asked to record observations from their hunts during the 2014 spring season. The gobbling activity and observational data obtained will assist WFF wildlife biologists in monitoring turkey populations and in making management decisions. The WFF appreciates those who are willing to take the 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 the wild turkey in Alabama. An invitation to participate in the survey is located in this report.

### Gobbling Activity

The number of individual gobblers and the total number of gobbles heard are used as indices to gobbling activity and associated peaks during the season. 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. Another interesting statistic is the number of gobblers heard per week of the 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, population size and population trends. Jake observations reflect the 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 two year old gobblers often lends itself to a good gobbling year. ✓

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## 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. ✓







# 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.

## Gobbling Activity and Observations

District 1 cooperators reported hearing 3,222 gobblers from 288 gobblers. On average, hunters heard 34 gobblers from three gobblers for each 10 hours hunted.

Gobblers seen per 100 hours hunted were 14.9. Jakes seen were 3.7 and hens observed per 100 hours were 34.

### Reproduction

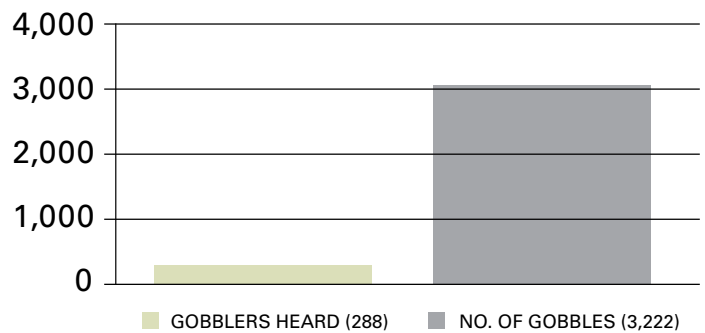
During the 2014 brood survey cooperators in District 1 observed 1.47 poults per hen, which was up slightly from 2013. A total of 202 hens were observed. Ninety-three hens (46%) successfully raised at least one poult for an average of 3.19 poults per hen with poults.

**POULTS PER HEN: 1.47**

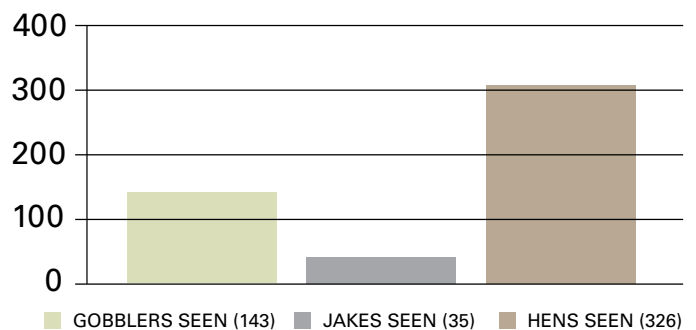
**HENS WITH POULTS: 46%**

**POULTS PER HEN WITH POULTS: 3.19**

Gobblers and Gobbles Heard



Turkey Observations



## District 1 - Wildlife Management Areas that Provide Turkey Hunting

### LAUDERDALE WMA

By Daniel Toole, WMA Wildlife Biologist

Lauderdale WMA is located near Waterloo, Ala., approximately 30 miles west of Florence in Lauderdale County. The Area encompasses 20,343 acres and contains tracts of mature hardwoods, dense loblolly pine plantations, thinned loblolly pine stands, short-leaf pine reforestation, and fresh clear cuts. There are hardwood drains of various sizes and shapes interspersed throughout most pine plantations and clearcuts. This diversity of timber types provides good turkey habitat. Prescribe burning

has been used in the past on a relatively small scale. Beginning in fall 2014, prescribed burning activities increased tremendously and will continue to be used on a three-year interval as a major tool to improve turkey habitat. Along with already established wildlife openings, additional early successional units will be established and managed with fire, drum chopper and/or bush bog disc. The 2014 turkey season was March 31 (physically disabled hunt) and April 1-30 (all day) with an estimated 525 hunter-days and 34 reported harvested birds. For more information on Lauderdale WMA, contact the District 1 Wildlife office at 256-353-2634.

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## RIVERTON COMMUNITY HUNTING AREA

*By Daniel Toole, WMA Wildlife Biologist*

Riverton Community Hunting Area is located 5 miles northwest of Cherokee, Ala., and approximately 20 miles west of Muscle Shoals in Colbert County. The area encompasses 6,791 acres and contains tracts of dense loblolly pine plantations, shortleaf pine reforestation, and fresh clearcuts. There are hardwood drains of various sizes and shapes interspersed throughout most pine plantations and clearcuts. The 2014 turkey season was March 31 (physically disabled hunt) and April 1-30 (hunting until 1 p.m.) with an estimated 131 hunter-days and nine reported harvested birds. For more information on Riverton CHA, contact the District 1 Wildlife office at 256-353-2634.

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## FREEDOM HILLS WMA

*By Daniel Toole, WMA Wildlife Biologist*

Freedom Hills WMA is located 8 miles south of Cherokee, Ala., and approximately 20 miles west of Muscle Shoals in Colbert County. The area encompasses 31,996 acres and contains tracts of mature hardwoods, dense loblolly pine plantations, shortleaf pine reforestation, and fresh clearcuts. There are hardwood drains of various sizes and shapes interspersed throughout most pine plantations and clearcuts. This diversity of timber types provides good turkey habitat. Prescribe burning has been used in the past and will increase tremendously in 2015. It will continue to be used on a three-year interval as a major tool to improve turkey habitat. Along with already established wildlife openings, additional early successional units will be established and managed with fire, drum chopper and/or bush bog disc. The 2014 turkey season was March 31 (physically disabled hunt) and April 1-30 (hunting until 1 p.m.) with an estimated 633 hunter-days and 41 reported harvested birds. For more information on Freedom Hills WMA, contact the District 1 Wildlife office at 256-353-2634.

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## BLACK WARRIOR WMA

*By Matt Brock, WMA Wildlife Biologist*

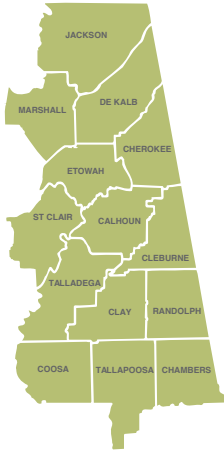
Black Warrior WMA is located in the Bankhead National Forest in Winston and Lawrence counties. The area encompasses over 92,000 acres, including the 26,000-acre Sipsey Wilderness. Most of the area is mature hardwood/hickory, or hardwood/pine forest. Recently, an effort has been made to restore loblolly pine to more naturally occurring shortleaf pine stands. A recent increase in thinning has also provided early successional habitat for nesting and brood-rearing hens, which is of limited availability in this forest. Prescribed fire is a frequent occurrence utilizing both dormant and growing season fire. A total of 98 acres of wildlife openings are planted in either summer or winter supplemental grains or clovers, which provide year round food sources for wild turkey. There are two special one-day hunts on Black Warrior, one for youth and one for disabled hunters, as well as a 30-day regular season beginning April 1. Special permits are issued for the youth hunt, while season map/permits are required for the disabled and regular hunting seasons. In 2014, there were an estimated 550 man-days of hunting resulting in an estimated harvest of 55 gobblers. For more information on the Black Warrior WMA, contact the District 1 Wildlife office at 256-353-2634.

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## SAM R. MURPHY WMA

*By Matt Brock, WMA Wildlife Biologist*

Sam R. Murphy WMA contains approximately 17,625 acres located near Guin, Ala., in Marion and Lamar counties. Forest stands on the area are corporately owned and are in various stages of loblolly pine rotation. There are stands of mature hardwoods along steep slopes and drainage areas with agricultural fields along the river. Permanent wildlife openings are managed in summer and fall to provide supplemental food sources to all wildlife. Sam R. Murphy WMA offers an early spring gobbler one-day hunt to youth hunters in addition to the regular spring gobbler season which is open to all hunters. The 2014 spring turkey season was an average year with an estimated 505 man-days of hunting and an estimated harvest of 45 gobblers. For more information on the Sam R. Murphy WMA, contact the District 1 Wildlife office at 256-353-2634. ♡



## DISTRICT 2

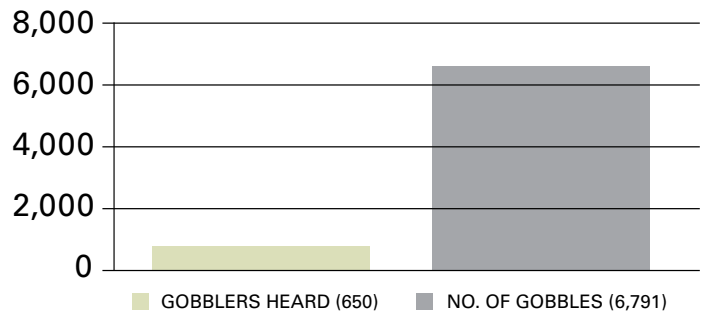
District 2 consists of 14 counties stretching from east central Alabama to the northeast corner of the state. It is a diverse linear area that encompasses the Piedmont, Interior Plateau, Appalachian Plateau, and Ridge and Valley Ecoregions. The lower portion of the district is mostly rolling hills and 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.

### Gobbling Activity and Observations

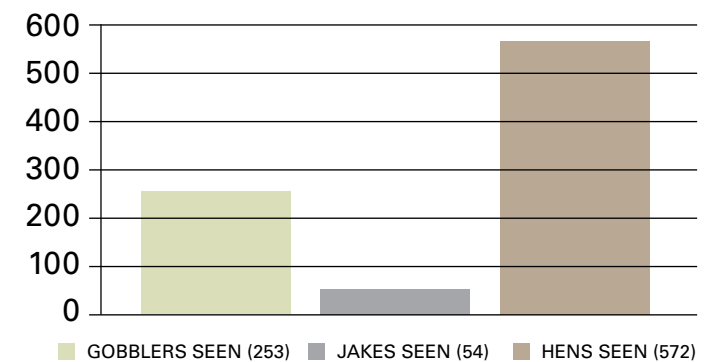
Cooperators in District 2 reported hearing 6,791 gobblers from 650 gobblers. On average, hunters heard 47 gobbles from four gobblers for each 10 hours hunted.

Gobblers seen per 100 hours hunted were 17.4. Jakes seen were 3.7 and hens observed per 100 hours were 39.3.

Gobblers and Gobblers Heard



Turkey Observations



### Reproduction

During the 2014 brood survey cooperators in District 2 observed 1.44 poults per hen, up slightly from 2013. A total of 411 hens were observed. One hundred and eighty-two hens (44.3%) successfully raised at least one poult. Poults per hen with poults was 3.25, which was slightly higher than the previous year.

**POULTS PER HEN:** 1.44

**HENS WITH POULTS:** 44.3%

**POULTS PER HEN WITH POULTS:** 3.25

## District 2 - Wildlife Management Areas that Provide Turkey Hunting

### JACKSON COUNTY WMAS AND REFUGES

*By Seth Maddox, WMA Wildlife Biologist*

Jackson County WMAs and Refuges are comprised of three WMAs and two Refuges located between the towns of Scottsboro and Stevenson in Jackson County in northeast Ala. One of the WMA's, Raccoon Creek WMA, has a tract of Forever Wild land called the Coon Gulf Tract. The Coon Gulf Tract is comprised of 3,500 acres of mountainous land with mixed hardwood timber on the sides and planted pines on top. There are a few hundred acres of native warm season grass plots along with the planted pines on top where prescribed fire is used on a two-year

interval to reduce unwanted woody vegetation encroachment and reduce fuel loads. This management practice has resulted in quality nesting and brood rearing habitat for turkeys as well as other wildlife. This tract of land offers a youth hunting day and a disabled hunting day around the last weekend of March and offers an open permit hunt during the last 30 days of the Alabama turkey season. During the 2014 season on the Coon Gulf Tract, 70 man-days of hunting were recorded and an estimated 11 birds were harvested. For more information about the Coon Gulf Forever Wild Tract, Contact the Jackson Co. WMAs and Refuges Office at 256-437-2788.

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### JAMES D. MARTIN – SKYLINE WMA

*By Frank Allen, WMA Wildlife Biologist*

James D. Martin–Skyline WMA is located about 17 miles North of Scottsboro in Jackson County. The area is 60,732 acres and primarily consists of hardwood forests, upland pine areas, small clearcuts and agricultural fields. The area is actively managed for wild turkeys through prescribed burning, management of wildlife openings, timber stand improvements, native warm season grass establishment, and roadside bugging area improvements. Habitat diversity across the landscape at Skyline WMA allows wild turkeys to have available nesting, brood-rearing and winter range areas. Turkey season normally begins March 15 each year and ends April 30. The annual harvest average is 43 over the past 10 seasons. For additional information about hunting at James D. Martin-Skyline WMA, please call 256-587-3114.

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### LITTLE RIVER WMA

*By Brandon Howell, WMA Wildlife Biologist*

Little River WMA is located just east of Fort Payne, AL in Cherokee and DeKalb counties. It totals to just more than 13,000 acres comprised of state and federal land. The habitat ranges from hardwood mountains to river bottoms thanks to its namesake, the Little River. Timber thinning and prescribed fire are used to “open up” areas for brood rearing habitat for wild turkey throughout the WMA. Herbaceous plantings are also used on Little River WMA. The turkey season runs concurrent with state season with one exception, turkey hunting is allowed only until 1 p.m. CST. During the 2014 season, Little River WMA had 450 man-days, and 20 harvested birds reported. For more information on the WMA, contact the District Office at 256-435-5422.

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### CHOCOLOCCO WMA

*By Brandon Howell, WMA Wildlife Biologist*

Choccolocco WMA is located within the Talladega National Forest just east of the Anniston/ Oxford area in Calhoun and Cleburne counties. It totals to just over 56,000 acres comprised of state and federal land. There are many different habitats ranging from longleaf pine stands to hardwood bottoms throughout

the WMA. Much of the area is under intense prescribed fire management regimes coupled with mid-story removal and multiple timber thinnings across the landscape. These strategies have greatly increased the number of turkeys in the past two decades. The turkey season on Choccolocco WMA is identical to the state season for Alabama. During the 2014 season, Choccolocco WMA had 840 man-days and 42 harvested birds reported. For more information on the WMA, contact the District Office at 256-435-5422.

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### HOLLINS WMA

*By Steven Mitchell, WMA Wildlife Biologist*

Hollins WMA is a 28,802-acre area located in the rolling Appalachian foothills near Hollins, Ala. in Clay and Talladega counties. The majority of the WMA consists of Forest Service land within the Talladega National Forest. The area contains mature Longleaf pine stands, mixed hardwood-pine stands, and hardwood drains. Long rotation timber management, prescribed fire, and permanent wildlife openings promote turkey habitat through the area. Turkey hunting on the area includes an archery only fall season and early spring dates for Youth and Physically Disabled hunters before the regular spring season, which begins on or about March 15. During 2014, the estimated harvest was 40 gobblers for 1,000 hunter-days.

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### COOSA WMA

*By Steven Mitchell, WMA Wildlife Biologist*

Coosa WMA contains 22,988 acres near Rockford, Ala. in Coosa County between Montgomery and Birmingham, and is one of the state’s oldest established hunting areas. The area holds thousands of acres of mountain longleaf pine habitat, mixed pine-hardwood and hardwood drains. The west side of the area is bordered by the Coosa River, with Mitchell Lake inside the WMA. Management practices benefiting turkeys include prescribed fire, permanent wildlife openings and long-term timber rotation in the longleaf areas. Hunting season on the area includes early Youth and Physically Disabled dates before the regular spring season which normally opens March 15. During the 2014 season, 800 hunter-days of effort resulted in 65 gobblers being harvested. ♡





## DISTRICT 3

District 3 consists of 13 counties in west central Alabama. The southern portion consists of Blackland prairie, bottomland hardwood, and industrial pine forest habitats. This area lies below the fall line and has mostly flat, to slightly rolling, terrain. The soils are typically not rocky. The northern portion of the district lies above the fall line and hilly with rocky soils. It is comprised of oak/hickory, mixed pine/hardwoods, and industrial pine forest habitats.

### Gobbling Activity and Observations

Cooperators in District 3 reported hearing 9,549 gobblers from 906 gobblers. On average, hunters heard 64 gobblers from six gobblers for each 10 hours hunted.

Gobblers seen per 100 hours hunted were 19.06. Jakes seen were 6.5 and hens observed per 100 hours were 25.5.

#### Reproduction

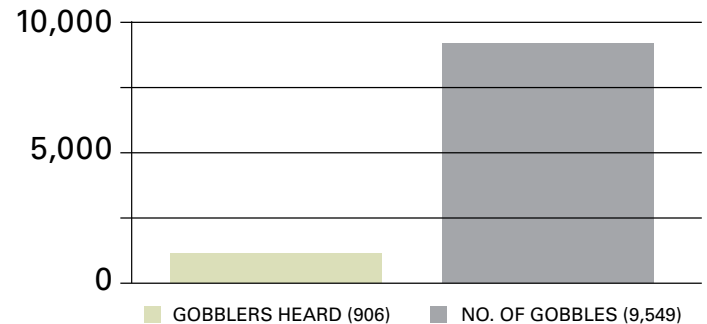
During the 2014 brood survey cooperators in District 3 observed 2.67 poults per hen which was up significantly higher than in the 2013 survey. A total of 166 hens were observed. One hundred and two hens (61.4%) successfully raised at least one poult. Poults per hen with poults was 4.35 which was slightly lower than last year.

**POULTS PER HEN:** 2.67

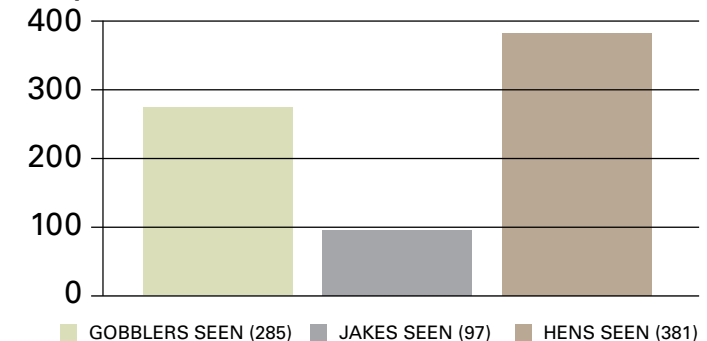
**HENS WITH POULTS:** 61.4%

**POULTS PER HEN WITH POULTS:** 4.35

#### Gobblers and Gobblers Heard



#### Turkey Observations



### District 3 - Wildlife Management Areas that Provide Turkey Hunting

#### 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. The 33,280 acre area is owned by Molpus Timberlands in which the State of Alabama's Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries acquired the hunting rights through the Forever Wild program. The terrain is very steep and rugged as this is along the southern end of the Appalachian Mountains. The timber which is managed by Molpus Timberlands is primarily pine stands ranging from large clearcuts to 25 year old stands which have been thinned. Streamside management zones

(SMZ) are scattered throughout the property and are primarily older aged hardwoods. Roughly 40 wildlife openings are planted annually for both cool and warm season forage for wild turkeys. Seasonal roads are left open during hunting season for access. The turkey season runs from mid-March through the end of April. Hunters using the area must purchase an Alabama hunting license and a Wildlife Management Area license along with the free map/permit to be legal. All turkeys harvested must be recorded at the self-service log book located at the check station. For more information on hunting the Mulberry Fork WMA, please contact the District III Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Office at 205-339-5716.

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## 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 total land acreage of the area is 40,738. The terrain throughout the area is very steep, rocky, and rugged. The uplands are pine stands managed on a 25-30 year rotation. The older stands have been thinned. Streamside management zones are abundant around the many creeks that feed into the river and are made up of older aged hardwoods. There are about 80 wildlife openings managed in cool season and warm season forage crops scattered throughout the area. A number of seasonal roads are left open during hunting season. Turkey season runs from mid-March through the end of April. All turkeys harvested must be reported at the self-service harvest log located at the check station near Pea Ridge. For more information on William R. Ireland, Sr.-Cahaba River WMA, contact the District III Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Office at 205-339-5716

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## OAKMULGEE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

*By Jeff Makemson, WMA Wildlife Biologist*

Oakmulgee Wildlife Management Area is the oldest WMA in Alabama, established in 1937 in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service. The WMA consists of 45,000 acres located in west central Alabama. The terrain is rolling hills with steep to moderate slopes. 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. This type of forest management creates ideal nesting and brood rearing habitat for turkeys. More than 100 wildlife openings are planted and maintained in a variety of warm and cool season forages. Some seasonal roads are closed during the turkey season to create walk-in turkey hunting areas. During the 2014 turkey season approximately 700 hunter-days were spent pursuing the wily turkey and 55 gobblers were harvested. Turkeys harvested must be recorded

on the self-service harvest log at the WMA Checking Station. For more information on Oakmulgee WMA, contact the District III Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries Office at 205-339-5716

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## LOWNDES WMA

*By Chris Jaworowski, WMA Wildlife Biologist*

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 old agricultural fields, hardwood river bottoms, swamp drainages, and mixed pine hardwood stands. Approximately 6,200 acres of old agricultural fields have been replanted with a mix of hardwood species. Permanent wildlife openings are scattered throughout the WMA and are planted in a variety of small grains for wild turkey and other species. Loblolly pine stands on the area are prescribed burned on three year rotations to provide suitable habitat for wild turkeys and other species. Other wildlife management practices that benefit wild turkey populations include mowing, strip disking, and timber harvests. Lowndes WMA offers a spring turkey season that runs from March 15 to April 30. During the 2014 season, 27 gobblers were harvested with 309 man-days of hunting. For more information on hunting on Lowndes WMA, call the District III Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries office at (205) 339-5716.

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## DAVID K. NELSON WMA

*By Justin Brock, WMA Wildlife Biologist*

David K. Nelson WMA is located on the Tombigbee and Black Warrior rivers near where the rivers merge. The area is comprised of 8,557 deeded acres provided to the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources by the United States Army Corps of Engineers. The majority of the WMA is made up of bottomland hardwood and wetland areas. However, some managed pine and native grass stands can be found on the area. Turkey hunting on David K. Nelson WMA is permissible from daylight until 1 p.m. during the statewide turkey season. During the 2014 season, there were an estimated 400 man-days of hunting with an estimated harvest of 25 turkeys. For more information on David K. Nelson WMA, contact the Demopolis Wildlife office at 334-289-8030. ♡



## DISTRICT 4

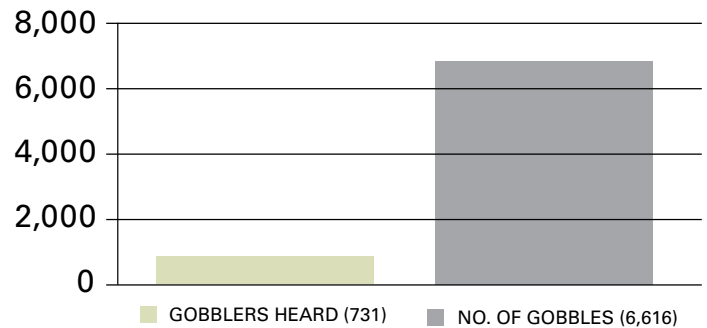
This region consists of 15 counties in the southeastern corner of Alabama. This region has four eco-regions: piedmont, coastal plain, black belt and lower coastal plain. The piedmont area is located on the northern fringe of the region and is mostly mixed pine-hardwood forest type with rocky mountainous 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.

### Gobbling Activity and Observations

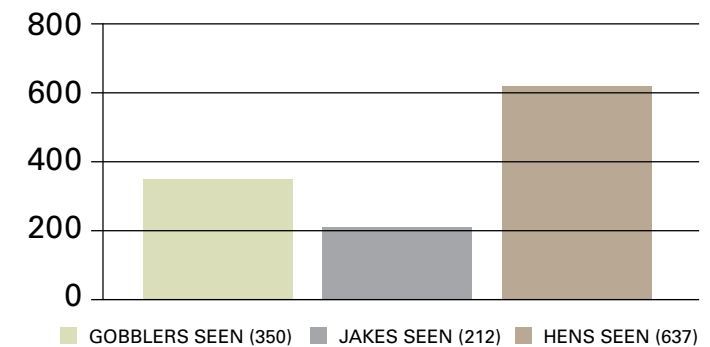
Cooperators in District 4 reported hearing 6,616 gobblers from 731 gobblers. On average, hunters heard 49 gobbles from five gobblers for each 10 hours hunted.

Gobblers seen per 100 hours hunted were 25.9. Jakes seen were 15.7 and hens observed per 100 hours were 47.1.

Gobblers and Gobbles



Turkey Observations



### Reproduction

During the 2014 brood survey cooperators in District 4 observed 1.59 poults per hen, which was down from 2013. A total of 165 hens were observed. Eighty-seven hens (52.7%) successfully raised at least one poult. Poults per hen with poults was 3.02, which was nearly identical to the past year.

**POULTS PER HEN:** 1.59

**HENS WITH POULTS:** 52.7%

**POULTS PER HEN WITH POULTS:** 3.02

### District 4 - Wildlife Management Areas that Provide Turkey Hunting

#### FOREVER WILD GOTHARD – AWF YATES LAKE WEST WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

By Brian Grice, WMA Wildlife Biologist

Forever Wild Gothard–AWF Yates Lake West WMA is a 5,493-acre area located in Elmore County near the city of Tallassee. The area is heavily forested and primarily consists of un-even-aged, mixed hardwood-pine stands. There are mature hardwoods scattered throughout the area, primarily located along the

steep slopes and drains that border the Tallapoosa River. Habitat management practices for wild turkey populations are not currently conducted on the area; however, future plans to do so are currently underway. The area provides suitable roosting habitat for wild turkeys, however, nesting and brood-rearing habitat is limited. Yates Lake West WMA annually provides a total of 51 days of wild turkey hunting in the spring. Three of those 51 days are allocated to special youth and physically disabled hunts. During the 2014 spring turkey season, 12 gobblers were harvested on this WMA during an estimated 203 man-days hunted.

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## BARBOUR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

*By Adam Pritchett, WMA Wildlife Biologist*

Barbour WMA is located in Barbour and Bullock counties near Clayton AL. It encompasses 28,213 acres and has a variety of forest types. Most of the area is pine timber with hardwoods in the drainages but there are some older stands of mixed pine/hardwood timber. The northern portion of the area has been re-established as a longleaf pine ecosystem. Frequent prescribed burning is used as a habitat management tool on the entire area. The long-term timber management goal is to manage for open pine habitat, convert loblolly pine stands to longleaf pine where soils are appropriate and maintain and enhance hardwood stands on steep slopes and in drainage systems. Permanent wildlife openings have been established 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. Barbour WMA offers a youth turkey hunting day the Saturday prior to opening day of spring season. There are 47 days allowed for hunting during turkey season. It is an open permit system with no restrictions on the number of hunters allowed. In 2014, there was a known harvest of 46 turkeys with an estimated 715 man-days. For more information about hunting Barbour WMA, contact area biologist Adam Pritchett at 334-529-3222.

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## BLUE SPRING WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

*By John Powers, WMA Wildlife Biologist*

Blue Spring WMA is 24,783 acres in size. It is forested by a mixture of longleaf and slash pines managed on a long rotation (70+ years) as part of a comprehensive management plan to restore historical longleaf pine habitats. Other aspects of this management include removal of understory and mid story components to encourage red cockaded wood pecker reestablishment on some tracts and a prescribed burning rotation of 2-5 years depending on the site. Mature hardwoods are present in creek bottoms and bays. Timber management is carried out by the U.S. Forest Service and has resulted in a mixture of habitats suitable for wild turkeys. The terrain is flat to low rolling hills. Permanent openings are managed to provide habitat for a variety of wildlife

species. Gobbler only season is open in the spring from on or about March 15 through April 30. During 2014, approximately 30 gobblers were harvested with approximately 600 man-days of effort. For more information about Blue Spring WMA, please call 1-334-898-7013.

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## GENEVA STATE FOREST WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

*By John Powers, WMA Wildlife Biologist.*

Geneva State Forest WMA is 10,368 acres in size. It is forested with variably thinned longleaf and slash pine which is burned at two- to three-year intervals. Some mature hardwoods are present along small creek bottoms. Timber management is carried out by the Alabama Forestry Commission and results in a mosaic of habitat suitable for wild turkeys. The terrain is flat to low rolling hills. Permanent openings are managed to provide habitat for a variety of wildlife species. Spring season for gobblers is open on or about March 15 through April 30. During the 2014 season, approximately 15 gobblers were harvested with about 300 man-days of effort. For more information about Geneva State Forest WMA, please call 1-334-898-7013. ✓



NWTF





## 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.

### Gobbling Activity and Observations

Cooperators in District 5 reported hearing 9,396 gobblers from 818 gobblers. On average, hunters heard 54 gobblers from five gobblers for each 10 hours hunted.

Gobblers seen per 100 hours hunted were 13.1. Jakes seen were 3.9 and hens observed per 100 hours were 20.8.

#### Reproduction

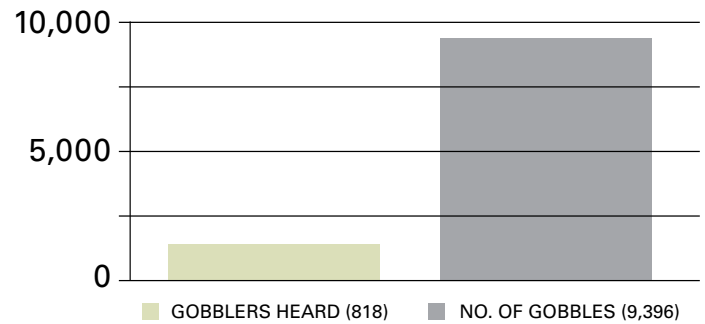
During the 2014 brood survey cooperators in District 5 observed 1.53 poults per hen, which was up significantly from 2013. A total of 196 hens were observed. Eighty-nine hens (45.4%) successfully raised at least one poult. Poults per hen with poults was 3.36, which was slightly higher than the previous year.

**POULTS PER HEN: 1.53**

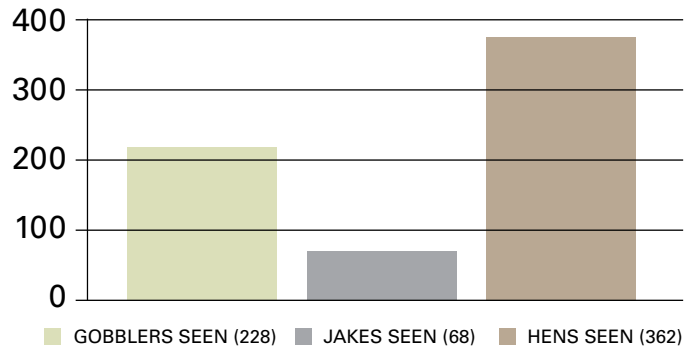
**HENS WITH POULTS: 45.4%**

**POULTS PER HEN WITH POULTS: 3.36**

Gobblers and Gobbles



Turkey Observations



### District 5 - Wildlife Management Areas that Provide Turkey Hunting

#### FRANK W. AND ROB M. BOYKIN WMA

*By Justin Monk, WMA Wildlife Biologist*

Frank and Rob Boykin WMA is a 17,632-acre area located in Mobile and Washington Counties near Citronelle, AL. It consists primarily of loblolly pine plantations in the uplands with mixed hardwood stands along creeks. The numerous broad hardwood stream bottoms produce mast and travel corridors for turkeys. Thirty acres of wildlife openings are also maintained for wild turkey foraging, nesting, and brood rearing. Herbicides are used to control exotic and invasive plants in areas of wildlife

openings. Habitat enhancement activities are limited due to the property being under a lease agreement with a private landowner. In the 2014 spring season, a total of 350 man-days of hunting were registered during the regular season. An estimated 14 gobblers were harvested. Hunters will be allowed to turkey hunt the WMA from March 14 through April 30 in 2015. A youth hunt is held the Saturday before the regular season opens. Hunters may hunt until 1 p.m. each day. For more information on hunting Frank and Rob Boykin WMA, contact the Spanish Fort office at 251-626-5474.

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## W. L. HOLLAND AND MOBILE-TENSAW DELTA WMA

*By Thomas E Harms, WMA Wildlife Biologist*

W. L. Holland and Mobile-Tensaw Delta WMA is located in the lower portion the Mobile-Tensaw Delta. This area covers from I-65 south to Battleship Parkway between Mobile and Baldwin County. The area encompasses approximately 51,040 acres and is primarily composed of marsh grass and cypress/gum swamp bottom, which are only accessible by boat. Two compartments are accessible by vehicle. One tract is in transition to be restored to a longleaf pine plantation. The uplands have been cut and left with mainly longleaf and some hardwoods. This area is on a rotational prescribed burn program and is mainly grasses and forbs. Herbicides are used on exotic and invasive plants. The tract is being managed to help promote turkey nest and brooding habitat. During the 2014 season, W. L. Holland and Mobile-Tensaw Delta WMA had an estimated 30 man-days of hunting and 1 turkey harvested. The regular season for 2015 is March 14-April 30. A youth hunt is held on the Saturday before the regular season. Hunters may hunt until 1:00 pm each day. For more information on Upper Delta WMA, contact the District V office at 251-626-5474.

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## PERDIDO RIVER WMA

*By Casey Norris, WMA Wildlife Biologist*

Perdido River WMA is located near Robertsedale in Baldwin County. The area encompasses approximately 17,337 acres, and is primarily composed of pine timber. Many management practices occur on Perdido River WMA that promote turkey habitat. Loblolly pines are removed and replaced with longleaf pine and various hardwoods. Underbrush is removed to create open, park-like conditions, and prescribed fire is used on three-year intervals to reduce fuel loads. This combination of management practices results in an interspersion of quality nesting and brood-rearing habitat throughout the area. Permanent wildlife openings have also been created to benefit turkeys. Hunting will be open from March 14-April 30 in the 2015 season with a youth hunt scheduled the Saturday before the regular season. During the 2014 turkey season, Perdido River WMA accrued 275 man-days of hunting with an estimated harvest of 12 gobblers. Hunting hours are from daylight until 1 p.m. For more infor-

mation on Perdido River WMA, contact the District Office at 251-626-5474.

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## SCOTCH WMA

*By Bruce W. Todd, WMA Wildlife Biologist*

Scotch WMA is a 19,480-acre area located near Coffeetown in Clarke County. The area is heavily forested with variable aged loblolly pine stands. Some longleaf pine is present in suitable soils across the area. Mature hardwoods exist in small pockets of mixed timber or in drains. This area is corporately owned and timber is managed strictly for tree production. There are approximately 27 acres of permanent wildlife openings that are managed by WFF personnel. These openings are primarily managed for the benefit of turkey and deer. Scotch WMA offers an early one-day youth hunt on the Saturday before the regular season (March 14-April 30 in 2015) for all hunters. All day hunting is permitted. During the spring of 2014, an estimated 25 gobblers were harvested during 325 man-days of hunting. For more information about Scotch WMA contact the District V Wildlife Office at 251-626-5474.

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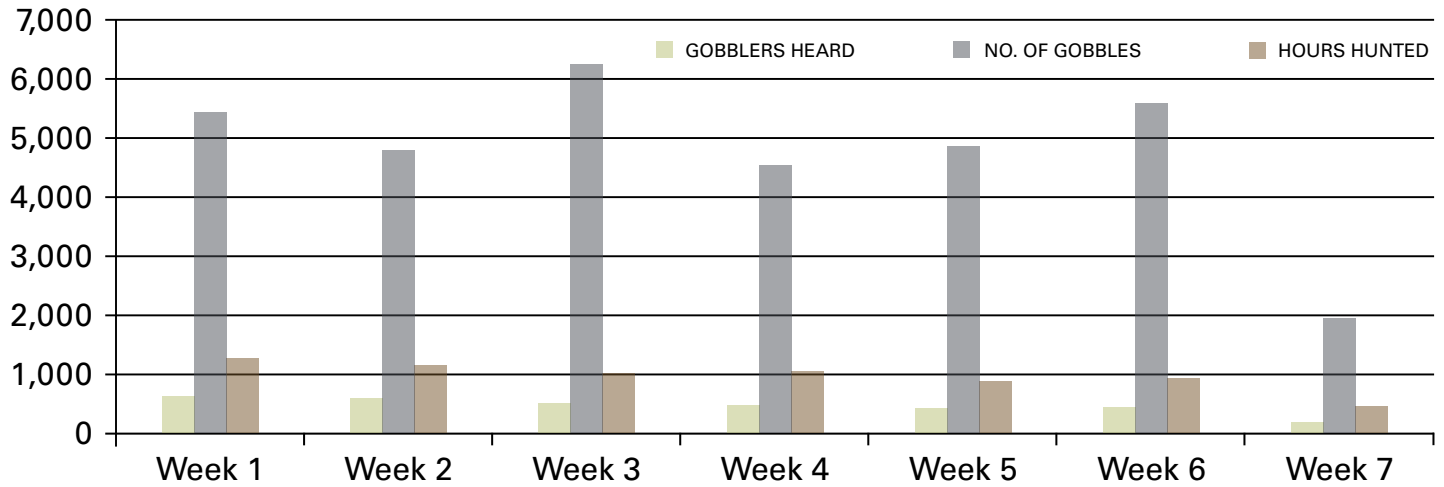
## UPPER DELTA WMA

*By Thomas E Harms, WMA Wildlife Biologist*

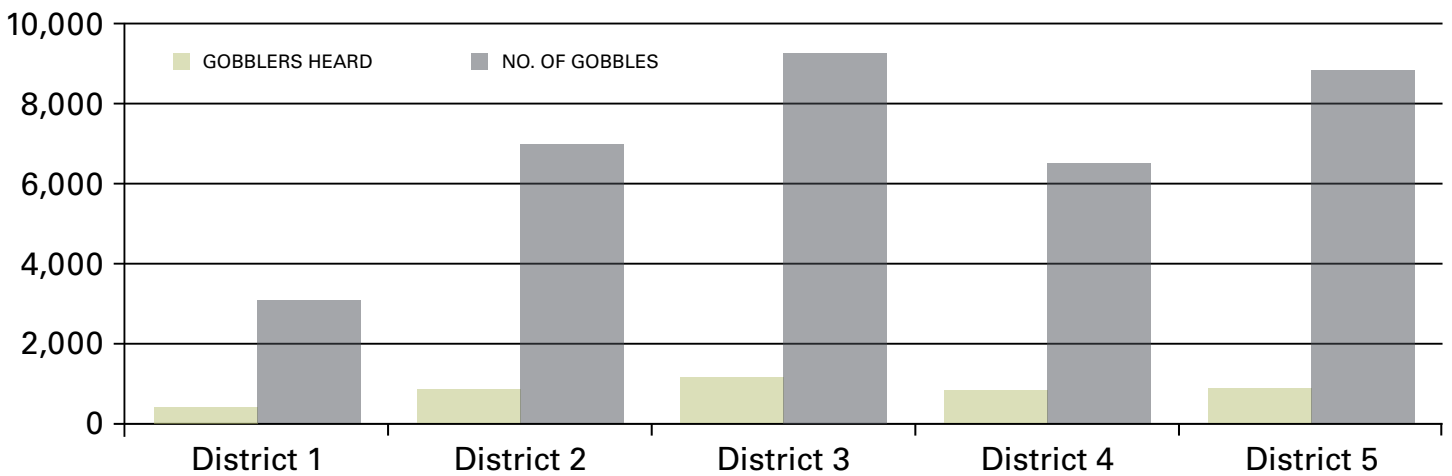
Upper Delta WMA is located in the upper portion the Mobile-Tensaw Delta. This area covers from I-65 north to the Alabama River between Mobile and Baldwin counties. The area encompasses approximately 42,451 acres and is primarily composed of cypress and gum swamp bottom with some small portion of mixed pine and hardwoods. Much of the Upper Delta is accessed by boat only. The portion that is accessible by vehicle consisting of pine plantation was clear cut, burned, and being prepped for Longleaf Pine restoration. This management practice will help promote turkey habitat. The timber will be on a prescribed fire rotation and other management practices that are needed to help control woody understory and promote nesting and brood-rearing habitat. During the 2014 season, Upper Delta WMA estimated 230 man-days and 16 turkeys harvested. The regular season will be March 14-April 30 in 2015. A youth hunt is held on the Saturday before the regular season. Hunters may hunt until 1 p.m. each day. For more information on Upper Delta WMA, contact the District V office at 251-626-5474. ✓

# STATEWIDE GOBBLING ACTIVITY

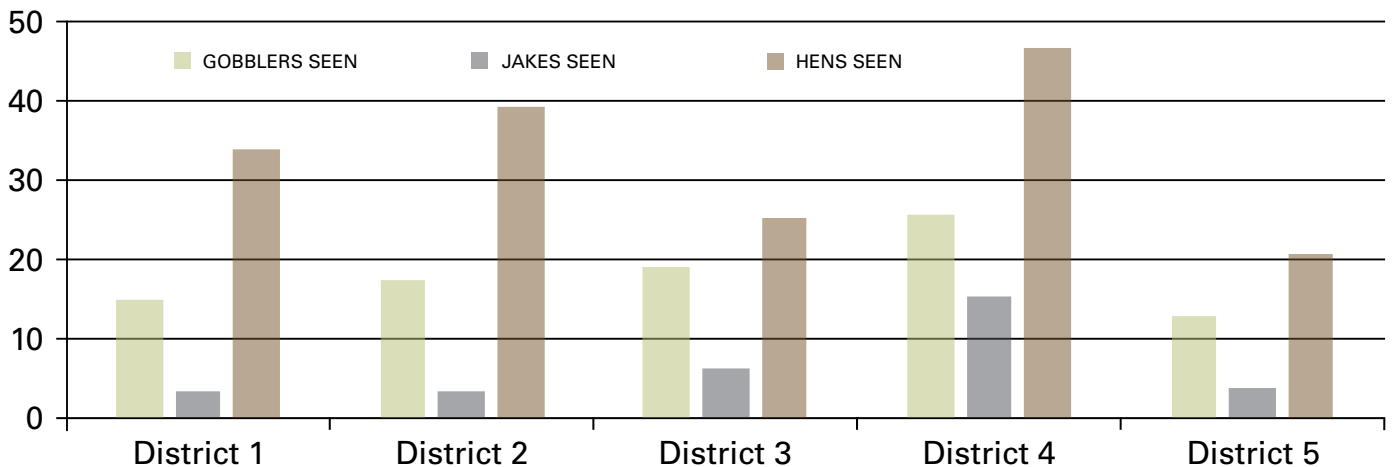
**Gobblers Heard, Number of Gobbles and Hours Hunted During the Seven Week Season**



**Gobblers Heard and Gobbles For Each District**



**Gobblers, Jakes, and Hens Seen Per 100 Hours of Hunting For Each District**



# 2010

## WILD TURKEY OBSERVATIONAL DATA SUMMARIES

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

	OBSERVATIONS	TURKEYS OBSERVED					POULTS PER HEN	POULTS PER HEN WITH POULTS	PERCENT OF HENS WITH POULTS	GOBLER TO HEN RATIO
		GOBLERS	HENS - Without Poults	HENS - with Poults	POULTS	Unknown				
<b>STATEWIDE</b>	388	360	241	328	1,157	107	2.03	3.53	57.6%	1:1.58
<b>DISTRICT 1 TOTALS</b>	87	59	87	58	187	3	1.29	3.22	40.0%	1: 2.46
<b>DISTRICT 2 TOTALS</b>	79	103	41	91	341	22	2.58	3.75	68.9%	1: 1.28
<b>DISTRICT 3 TOTALS</b>	100	93	40	97	320	67	2.34	3.30	70.8%	1: 1.47
<b>DISTRICT 4 TOTALS</b>	37	27	12	35	156	5	3.32	4.46	74.5%	1: 1.74
<b>DISTRICT 5 TOTALS</b>	85	78	61	47	153	10	1.42	3.26	43.5%	1: 1.38
<b>(#1) Limestone Valleys &amp; Uplands</b>	30	19	15	20	64	4	1.83	3.20	57.1%	1: 1.84
<b>(#2) Appalachian Plateau</b>	115	63	82	89	311	14	1.82	3.49	52.0%	1: 2.71
<b>(#3) Piedmont Plateau</b>	19	61	12	28	132	10	3.30	4.71	70.0%	1: 0.66
<b>(#4) Blackland Prairie</b>	3	1	0	3	11	1	3.67	3.67	100.0%	1: 3.00
<b>(#5) Upper Coastal Plain</b>	155	172	90	121	377	76	1.79	3.12	57.3%	1: 1.23
<b>(#6) Lower Coastal Plain</b>	65	43	42	67	262	2	2.40	3.91	61.5%	1: 2.53
<b>Public Lands</b>	256	254	177	223	781	84	1.95	3.50	55.8%	1: 1.57
<b>Private Lands</b>	132	106	64	105	376	23	2.22	3.58	62.1%	1: 1.59



# 2011

## WILD TURKEY OBSERVATIONAL DATA SUMMARIES

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

	OBSERVATIONS	TURKEYS OBSERVED					POULTS PER HEN	POULTS PER HEN WITH POULTS	PERCENT OF HENS WITH POULTS	GOBLER TO HEN RATIO
		GOBBLERS	HENS - Without Poults	HENS - with Poults	POULTS	Unknown				
<b>STATEWIDE</b>	393	348	220	305	1,114	58	2.12	3.65	58.1%	1: 1.51
<b>DISTRICT 1 TOTALS</b>	84	36	60	49	114	3	1.05	2.33	45.0%	1: 3.03
<b>DISTRICT 2 TOTALS</b>	120	133	65	111	427	2	2.43	3.85	63.1%	1: 1.32
<b>DISTRICT 3 TOTALS</b>	65	62	18	73	266	40	2.92	3.64	80.2%	1: 1.47
<b>DISTRICT 4 TOTALS</b>	29	11	9	22	121	5	3.90	5.50	71.0%	1: 2.82
<b>DISTRICT 5 TOTALS</b>	95	106	68	50	186	8	1.58	3.72	42.4%	1: 1.11
<b>(#1) Limestone Valleys &amp; Uplands</b>	26	13	17	25	99	0	2.36	3.96	59.5%	1: 3.23
<b>(#2) Appalachian Plateau</b>	84	118	31	73	248	11	2.38	3.40	70.2%	1: 0.88
<b>(#3) Piedmont Plateau</b>	46	19	38	25	123	0	1.95	4.92	39.7%	1: 3.32
<b>(#4) Blackland Prairie</b>	20	11	8	24	113	1	3.53	4.71	75.0%	1: 2.91
<b>(#5) Upper Coastal Plain</b>	131	106	71	97	257	33	1.53	2.65	57.7%	1: 1.58
<b>(#6) Lower Coastal Plain</b>	86	81	55	61	274	13	2.36	4.49	52.6%	1: 1.43
<b>Public Lands</b>	366	298	209	280	917	112	1.88	3.28	57.3%	1: 1.64
<b>Private Lands</b>	217	104	106	198	689	31	2.27	3.48	65.1%	1: 2.92

# 2012 WILD TURKEY OBSERVATIONAL DATA SUMMARIES

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

	OBSERVATIONS	TURKEYS OBSERVED					POULTS PER HEN	POULTS PER HEN WITH POULTS	PERCENT OF HENS WITH POULTS	GOBLER TO HEN RATIO
		GOBLERS	HENS - Without Poults	HENS - with Poults	POULTS	Unknown				
<b>STATEWIDE</b>	583	402	315	478	1,606	143	2.03	3.36	60.3%	1: 1.97
<b>DISTRICT 1 TOTALS</b>	106	69	53	106	278	38	1.75	2.62	66.7%	1: 2.30
<b>DISTRICT 2 TOTALS</b>	215	136	136	192	620	15	1.89	3.23	58.5%	1: 2.41
<b>DISTRICT 3 TOTALS</b>	99	78	30	75	293	34	2.79	3.91	71.4%	1: 1.35
<b>DISTRICT 4 TOTALS</b>	43	16	33	25	131	34	2.26	5.24	43.1%	1: 3.63
<b>DISTRICT 5 TOTALS</b>	120	103	63	80	284	22	1.99	3.55	55.9%	1: 1.39
<b>(#1) Limestone Valleys &amp; Uplands</b>	15	15	10	24	96	7	2.82	4.00	70.6%	1: 2.27
<b>(#2) Appalachian Plateau</b>	79	81	38	98	270	42	1.99	2.76	72.1%	1: 1.68
<b>(#3) Piedmont Plateau</b>	169	65	110	111	404	10	1.83	3.64	50.2%	1: 3.40
<b>(#4) Blackland Prairie</b>	23	20	2	35	126	0	3.41	3.60	94.6%	1: 1.85
<b>(#5) Upper Coastal Plain</b>	193	116	110	127	398	40	1.68	3.13	53.6%	1: 2.04
<b>(#6) Lower Coastal Plain</b>	102	102	44	83	312	44	2.46	3.76	65.4%	1: 1.25
<b>Public Lands</b>	366	298	209	280	917	112	1.88	3.28	57.3%	1: 1.64
<b>Private Lands</b>	217	104	106	198	689	31	2.27	3.48	65.1%	1: 2.92

# 2013 WILD TURKEY OBSERVATIONAL DATA SUMMARIES

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

	OBSERVATIONS	TURKEYS OBSERVED					POULTS PER HEN	POULTS PER HEN WITH POULTS	PERCENT OF HENS WITH POULTS	GOBLER TO HEN RATIO
		GOBLERS	HENS - Without Poults	HENS - with Poults	POULTS	Unknown				
<b>STATEWIDE</b>	811	997	553	424	1,394	155	1.43	3.29	43.4%	1: 0.98
<b>DISTRICT 1 TOTALS</b>	70	97	44	38	97	16	1.18	2.55	46.3%	1: 0.85
<b>DISTRICT 2 TOTALS</b>	346	343	275	203	633	27	1.32	3.12	42.5%	1: 1.39
<b>DISTRICT 3 TOTALS</b>	151	143	89	64	291	73	1.90	4.55	41.8%	1: 1.07
<b>DISTRICT 4 TOTALS</b>	101	160	35	75	227	27	2.06	3.03	68.2%	1: 0.69
<b>DISTRICT 5 TOTALS</b>	143	254	110	44	146	12	0.95	3.32	28.6%	1: 0.61
<b>(#1) Limestone Valleys &amp; Uplands</b>	48	78	32	38	96	5	1.37	2.53	54.3%	1: 0.90
<b>(#2) Appalachian Plateau</b>	60	35	33	35	161	9	2.37	4.60	51.5%	1: 1.94
<b>(#3) Piedmont Plateau</b>	282	257	235	141	435	23	1.16	3.09	37.5%	1: 1.46
<b>(#4) Blackland Prairie</b>	44	49	13	34	143	24	3.04	4.21	72.3%	1: 0.96
<b>(#5) Upper Coastal Plain</b>	274	430	179	102	343	92	1.22	3.36	36.3%	1: 0.65
<b>(#6) Lower Coastal Plain</b>	102	147	57	74	216	2	1.65	2.92	56.5%	1: 0.89
<b>Public Lands</b>	372	456	206	224	699	77	1.63	3.12	52.1%	1: 0.94
<b>Private Lands</b>	439	541	347	200	695	78	1.27	3.48	36.6%	1: 1.01

# 2014

## WILD TURKEY OBSERVATIONAL DATA SUMMARIES

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

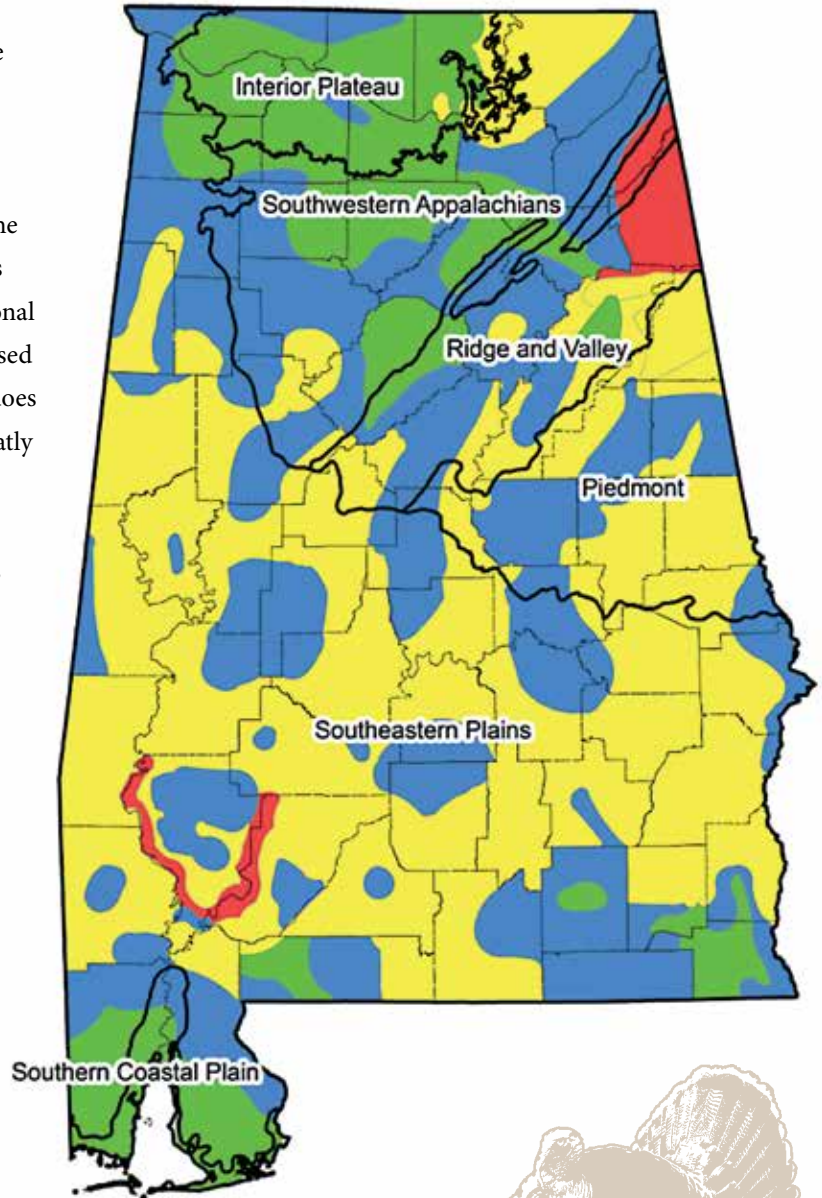
	OBSERVATIONS	TURKEYS OBSERVED					POULTS PER HEN	POULTS PER HEN WITH POULTS	PERCENT OF HENS WITH POULTS	GOBLER TO HEN RATIO
		GOBBLERS	HENS - Without Poults	HENS - with Poults	POULTS	Unknown				
<b>STATEWIDE</b>	950	948	587	553	1,895	188	1.66	3.43	48.5%	1: 1.20
<b>DISTRICT 1 TOTALS</b>	183	177	109	93	297	48	1.47	3.19	46.0%	1: 1.14
<b>DISTRICT 2 TOTALS</b>	333	312	229	182	592	61	1.44	3.25	44.3%	1: 1.32
<b>DISTRICT 3 TOTALS</b>	153	218	64	102	444	37	2.67	4.35	61.4%	1: 0.76
<b>DISTRICT 4 TOTALS</b>	119	88	78	87	263	20	1.59	3.02	52.7%	1: 1.88
<b>DISTRICT 5 TOTALS</b>	162	153	107	89	299	22	1.53	3.36	45.4%	1: 1.28
<b>(#1) Limestone Valleys &amp; Uplands</b>	45	41	31	37	110	12	1.62	2.97	54.4%	1: 1.66
<b>(#2) Appalachian Plateau</b>	101	81	54	75	278	9	2.16	3.71	58.1%	1: 1.59
<b>(#3) Piedmont Plateau</b>	284	194	194	149	455	56	1.33	3.05	43.4%	1: 1.77
<b>(#4) Blackland Prairie</b>	120	158	77	70	217	27	3.04	4.21	72.3%	1: 0.96
<b>(#5) Coastal Plain</b>	400	393	237	229	855	89	1.83	3.73	49.1%	1: 1.19
<b>Public Lands</b>	400	358	209	275	883	81	1.82	3.21	56.8%	1: 1.35
<b>Private Lands</b>	550	595	384	285	1,032	112	1.54	3.62	42.6%	1: 1.12





# 2015 EASTERN WILD TURKEY DENSITY MAP

This wild turkey density map represents an estimate generated by WFF staff wildlife biologists in each region of the state. Total population estimates were determined by evaluating local land cover types suitable for wild turkeys and percent occupancy. The known quality of the habitat is considered as well as reproductive trends and harvests. Other observational data are taken into account as well. It must be stressed that the turkey population is an estimate only and does not meet scientific rigor. Populations may vary greatly from year to year due to landscape changes, habitat management, nesting success, brood survival, adult survival, and other factors. Adult gobbler estimates (2 years old and older) are based on a population structure model.



## DENSITY ESTIMATES

- 0 - 6 Turkey / 0 - 1 Adult Gobblers per. sq. mile (LOW)
- 6 - 15 Turkey / 1 - 2 Adult Gobblers per. sq. mile (MEDIUM)
- 16 - 25 Turkey / 3 - 4 Adult Gobblers per. sq. mile (HIGH)
- 26+ Turkey / Greater Than 4 Adult Gobblers per. sq. mile (VERY HIGH)





# 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 collects data on turkey activity and population numbers. Avid turkey hunters were selected by reviewing the data from Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries (WFF) annual hunter harvest mail survey and requesting individuals who indicated they turkey hunted 10 or more days per season to participate. Letters were mailed to these people asking them to take part. This barely scratched the surface of the avid turkey hunters in the state; however, it was a good starting point. We appreciate all of those who took part. Now we hope to expand our numbers exponentially. The success of the survey is largely due to voluntary participation by avid hunters who are interested in assisting with turkey conservation within the state. Although we had relatively few hunters assist in our first year, their participation did result in more statewide data collected than in any previous year.

The more hunters who participate, the better the data will be. From this dataset, biologists at the WFF gain 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 the sportsmen with the wise use of the state's turkey resource. Participation in this process allows hunters a unique opportunity to contribute directly to the conservation and management of turkey in Alabama.

### Benefits of Participation

As a participant you will receive a copy of *Full Fans & Sharp Spurs*, the Alabama Turkey Program annual report. This report discusses turkey population trends, biology and management in each area of the state.

Management decisions of the WFF that directly affect your recreational opportunities as a sportsman and conservationist will

be made using the best available data. 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.

### 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. We will provide you with a record sheet that will make it easy for you to document your hunting experience. At the end of the season, you can submit the data electronically to us for analysis.

If you would like to become involved, please contact one of the WFF Turkey Program Biologists listed below or go to [www.outdooralabama.com/wild-turkey](http://www.outdooralabama.com/wild-turkey). Your efforts will assist the Division in monitoring Alabama's turkeys and making 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](mailto:steve.barnett@dcnr.alabama.gov) or

**Joel Glover, Alabama Asst. Turkey Project Leader**  
[joel.glover@dcnr.alabama.gov](mailto:joel.glover@dcnr.alabama.gov)



# WIN A SHOTGUN

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In an effort to increase participation in the Avid Turkey Hunter Survey, the Alabama Chapter of the NWTF has graciously agreed to give away a shotgun. Hunters who provide hunting data for the 2015 season by May 31, 2015, will have their name entered in to a drawing for the shotgun. Hunter participation is the lifeblood of the *Full Fans & Sharp Spurs Turkey Report*. Please take part in the survey and invite a friend to do so as well.

ALABAMA STATE CHAPTER



# NWTF





# NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION

## Phil Savage, Alabama State NWTF Chapter President



The Alabama Chapter of the NWTF would like to thank the many volunteers around the state who continue to help make Alabama one of the top membership states in the NWTF. The NWTF continues to do well in the conservation arena and we hope that if you are not currently a member of the Federation that you will strongly consider joining. Alabama has approximately 70 chapters around the state and each of these chapters will soon be hosting hunting heritage banquets for 2015. You can find a banquet near you by visiting the NWTF website at [www.nwtf.org](http://www.nwtf.org).

Alabama continues to be blessed and recognized as a great destination to hunt wild turkeys in the spring. We cannot always take for granted the abundance of wildlife that we have in this state. The Alabama Chapter NWTF

is proud of the partnership that we share with the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) in helping to promote wildlife habitat and preservation of the wild turkey.

Much of this publication is the result of hard work by staff of the ADCNR and the turkey hunters who participated in the spring gobbler hunting survey this past spring. Also, thanks goes to NWTF Regional Biologist Brandon Bobo for his assistance. Thank you to everyone who help make this publication a reality.

Finally, the Alabama Chapter NWTF is proud to be a major donor in the funding of this publication. We truly hope and trust that you will find the contents informative and enjoyable to read. ♡

## Brandon Bobo, NWTF Regional Biologist



Before I dive into some of the details about the success stories regarding the Alabama Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation, I would like to thank some of the individuals and entities that devote their time and hard work toward “the conservation of the wild turkey and the preservation of our hunting heritage.” After all, that is our mission statement at the NWTF. I would be regretful if I did not take some time to thank all of our volunteers for their unwavering commitment and dedication to promoting the sport that has become so entrenched as a way of life for all of us as devout turkey hunters.

Thanks are also due to the ADCNR for their help and diligent work to insure a healthy population of wild turkeys and a season to hunt them here in the Heart of Dixie. More specifically, I would like to extend my gratitude to two individuals who have been very helpful to me since joining the team here in Alabama and have become friends of mine who I respect and appreciate, Joel Glover and Steve Barnett of WFF. These two guys have dedicated their careers to the promotion of the wild turkey, and this publication is made possible because of them.

Another thank-you is in order for all of our board members, elected officials of the Ala-

bama State Chapter, and all of the NWTF staff here in Alabama. I must also thank all of our partners here in the state who help us to leverage more conservation dollars and work on the ground. Thanks are in order for the Natural Resource Conservation Service, United States Forest Service, Alabama Forestry Commission, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Alabama Cooperative Extension System, the Longleaf Alliance, and the Alabama Wildlife Federation. I apologize to all other partners who I'm sure I have forgotten. Last, I have to extend a special thanks to my family for their love and support. To my wife, Ashley, thank you for putting up with me throughout the hunting seasons when I spend so much time away from home, and for being such

a blessing to me. To my daughter, Karlie, thank you for bringing so much joy into our lives over the last two years since you have been in our lives. Both of you give me a reason to work hard every day, and I love you both!

I am extremely blessed and I feel quite privileged to be coming on board as your biologist here in Alabama. For the past two years, I have served on the NWTF staff as the Regional Biologist for the state of Mississippi, and I am excited to now be back home here in Alabama where I was born and raised. I am optimistic about working with all of you here in the state, and please do not hesitate to contact me if there is anything I can help with. ✂

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## NWTF Awards



### Alabama's 2015 NWTF Officer of the Year CLINT TYUS

This year's National Wild Turkey Federation Officer of the Year from Alabama is Conservation Enforcement Officer (CEO) Clint Tyus. Clint is assigned to Perry County in Central Alabama.

During the 2014 spring turkey season

Clint made arrests for hunting over bait, hunting from an elevated stand, hunting without a license and failure to record a harvested turkey. In addition to enforcing the laws and regulations that protect the resource and even the playing field for all hunters, Officer Tyus also assisted with the Wounded Warriors Turkey Hunt in Perry County.

Before beginning his career as a CEO, Clint served as a vocational agriculture teacher. He continues to utilize those skills teaching hunter education and instructing at the Becoming an Outdoors Woman event each year. In addition, he has also assisted with the Alabama State Archery in the Schools Championship.

In nominating Clint, Lt. Todd Draper said Clint possesses the dedication and success other CEOs can look up to. We are proud to have Clint represent Alabama at the National NWTF convention and wish him the best in the national competition. ✂



### NWTF Lifetime Achievement Award RON EAKES

Retired Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries (WFF) wildlife biologist Ron Eakes was awarded the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) Wayne Bailey Lifetime Achievement Award for his lifelong

commitment to conservation. Eakes accepted the award during the NWTF's 36th annual National Convention and Sport Show in Nashville, Tenn.

Eakes, who retired in 2011, received the award in honor of his 27 years of conservation work, which helped restore wild turkey populations in North America.

"I was floored to even be considered for this award," Eakes told the NWTF. "For 40 years I have been studying conservation, volunteering for conservation projects or participating on a professional level. Being honored with this award for simply following my passion means the world to me."

"Wayne Bailey was known to many as the godfather of modern turkey management and was a key player in the development of the NWTF," said James Earl Kenammer, Ph.D., NWTF's chief conservation officer. "Ron's work is the embodiment of what Wayne Bailey stood for and he truly deserves this honor. The NWTF could ask for no better partner."



## NWTF Awards – (Continued)

Before his retirement, Eakes served on the NWTF Technical Committee for 15 years and worked with the Alabama NWTF board of directors on a range of projects. Eakes also played an important role in the acquisition of public hunting lands by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) and the Alabama State Chapter of the NWTF, which purchased 22,000 acres for public use over a 10-year period. ♡



### **Wildlife Manager of the Year Award** **FRED PRINGLE**

Fred Pringle began his stellar career with the WFF in 1965 and trapped an award that will never be released. The National Wild Turkey Federation presented the Joe Kurz Wildlife Manager of the Year Award to Fred Pringle, of Jackson,

Ala., during the 27th Annual Convention and Sport Show in Nashville, Tenn., Feb. 13-16, 2003.

Pringle has been instrumental in the restoration of Alabama's wild turkey population and has moved up the ranks to his current position as Area Manager and Biologist Aide III. Since the inception of Alabama's trapping program in 1943, 1,936 wild turkeys have been trapped and relocated throughout Alabama, with Pringle involved in about 1,392 of those releases.

"Fred Pringle has been a monumental force in assisting the trap and transfer efforts in Alabama," said Dr. James Earl Kennamer, NWTF senior vice president for Conservation Programs. "Because of Fred's hard work and leadership, turkey populations have been restored that bring economic dollars to the state, which allows us and future generations to enjoy the gobble of the wild turkey."

Pringle has mentored many staff biologists throughout his tenure and has worked with the NWTF's Making Tracks program to relocate birds to other states.

In addition to his trapping responsibilities, Pringle plants wildlife openings, coordinates prescribed burns, provides assistance on timber management activities, maintains roads and bridges and manages the upkeep of equipment and building grounds on the Stimpson Wildlife Sanctuary in Jackson.

Considered an unsung hero of Alabama wildlife management, Pringle's behind the scenes contributions—from clearing roadways of storm damage to building bald eagle hacking towers for the non-game program — have significantly enhanced wildlife resources in the state. ♡



### **NWTF Law Enforcement Officer of the Year** **BRYAN FISHER**

Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries (WFF) Conservation Enforcement Officer Bryan Fisher was named the 2012 National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year by the National Wild Turkey Federation

(NWTF). Fisher received the award during the organization's national convention in Nashville on Feb. 11, 2012. In addition to the national award, Fisher also won the NWTF Alabama State Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award.

WFF District I Law Enforcement Captain Johnny Johnson, who nominated Fisher for the award, cited character, integrity, professionalism and work ethic among his strengths. "Bryan is uncompromising in his position and treats everyone with respect and fairness, but shows no mercy for poachers and violators," Johnson said. "He works diligently to protect Alabama's natural resources, and is very deserving of this prestigious award."

"The NWTF Award recognizes officers who have shown exemplary performance of their duties," said Kevin Dodd, WFF Enforcement Chief. "We thank him for his excellent service to the people and natural resources of our state."

Since joining the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) in 2006, Fisher has made more than 1,000 arrests for hunting and fishing violations, including 35 wild turkey related charges. Fisher, who is currently assigned to Fayette County, is also an active member of Ducks Unlimited and the Fraternal Order of Police. In 2009, Fisher was named Alabama Wildlife Officer of the Year by the Shikar-Safari Club International. ♡



## NWTF Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

DARIN CLIFTON

Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries (WFF) Conservation Enforcement Officer Darin Clifton was named the 2013 National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year by the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF). Clifton received the award

during the organization's national convention in Nashville on Feb. 16, 2013. This was the second year in a row that a Conservation Enforcement Officer from Alabama won the award. Bryan Fisher received the award in 2012.

Clifton began his career with WFF in 1995. During the 2012 spring turkey season, Clifton made several arrests for turkey hunting violations including two suspects arrested for numerous violations on Alabama's Special Youth Turkey Hunt, and several other suspects for hunting violations on the Sam Murphy Wildlife Management Area in Lamar County where he is assigned.

WFF District I Law Enforcement Captain Johnny Johnson nominated Clifton for the award citing his character, professionalism

and work ethic. "Darin has one of the best attitudes towards the profession of any officer I've had the pleasure of working with," Johnson said. "He consistently goes above and beyond what is required of him. For example, Darin volunteered countless hours in the recovery efforts following the tornadoes that devastated Alabama in 2011."

Kevin Dodd, WFF Law Enforcement Chief, echoes Johnson's praise of Clifton. "Officer Clifton is well established in the community as is evident in the effectiveness of his work," Dodd said. "We are exceptionally proud of him receiving this award especially considering the multitude of excellent candidates from other states."

Clifton is a certified hunter education instructor with an FBI Firearms Instructor Certification, and promotes hunting and fishing to youth at local schools and at speaking engagements to various groups including local Boy Scout troops.

In addition to his WFF duties, Clifton frequently serves in outreach programs such as the NWTF's Juniors Acquiring Knowledge, Ethics and Sportsmanship (JAKES) and Women in the Outdoors as well as the National Archery in the Schools Program. He also participates in various youth hunts and fishing events, and assists in events for people with disabilities. ✎

# Tagged Out



[www.nwtf.org/alabama](http://www.nwtf.org/alabama)

# HUNTING HERITAGE SUPER FUND 2014

It is a great time for the NWTF here in Alabama, and we are making some tremendous strides toward our goal of putting more conservation dollars on the ground and preserving our hunting heritage. Over the last year, the Alabama Chapter of NWTF has spent \$113,952.59, which does not include payments made from the months of October to December that will be submitted before the end of the calendar year. A breakdown of all of these projects can be found at the end of this section.

One of the most impressive figures that can be gathered from these projects is the amount of money contributed toward our NWTF Seed Subsidy Program. With a total approaching almost \$30,000.00, Alabama is atop the leader board when it comes to commitment to seed subsidy opportunities for its members. This contribution is unparalleled across the country, and it is not even

close. This reflects a strong obligation by our state chapter to serve the needs and interest of all of us as members, because this is a program that is designed specifically to enhance our ability to conserve acreage on private lands. Alabamians can take pride in having the knowledge that we lead the pack in terms of subsidized seed cost for our members.

The amount of dollars we are allocating toward wild turkey conservation and hunting heritage preservation are indicative of the enthusiasm of our volunteers and staff, and this enthusiasm results in a broad expansion of our membership base across the state. As we raise more funds, we provide an increasing amount of wild turkey habitat, accomplish more research, gain more hunting access, establish more outreach events, and provide more education here in the Heart of Dixie! 🦃



State Chapter President, Phil Savage (left), presenting a check to WFF Director Chuck Sykes for habitat work being accomplished on public lands across the state. These funds are matched 3 to 1 from Pittman-Robertson funds to leverage \$35,000 into \$140,000.

Billy Pope

## 2014 ALABAMA STATE SUPER FUND EXPENDITURES

### SCHOLARSHIPS

22 Local Chapter Scholarships	\$5,500.00
1 State Scholarship	\$1,250.00

### EDUCATION

Alabama's Archery in the Schools Program	\$6,470.20
National Archery in the Schools Program Alabama state tournament	\$5,000.00
Tallapoosa County Hunter Education Program	\$1,200.00

### HUNTING HERITAGE

Hunting Heritage Foundation	\$2,500.00
United States Shooting Sports	\$2,500.00
National Assembly of Sportsmen	\$2,000.00

### OUTREACH EVENTS

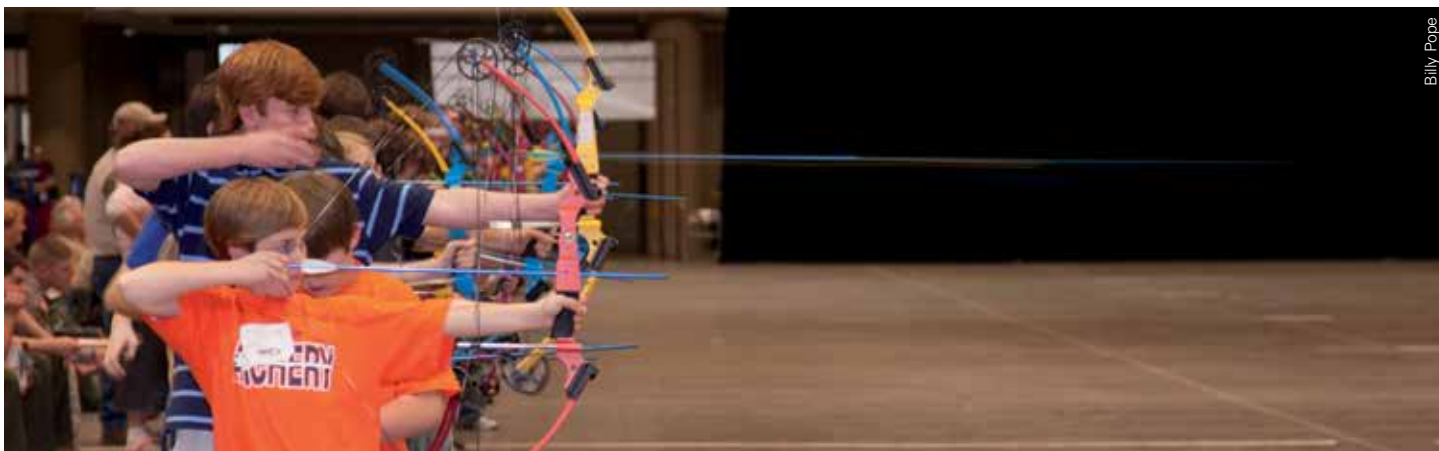
Talladega County Longbeards Chapter JAKE's Events	\$250.00
Elmore County Chapter JAKE's Event	\$250.00
Bankhead Beards and Spurs Chapter JAKE's Event	\$250.00
Marengo County Longbeards Chapter JAKE's Event	\$250.00
Covington County Cutters and Strutters Chapter JAKE's Event	\$500.00
Clay County Area Chapter JAKE's Event	\$250.00
Sipsey Strutters Chapter JAKE's Event	\$250.00
West Mobile Golden Spurs Chapter JAKE's Event	\$250.00
Evergreen Chapter JAKE's Event	\$250.00
Blackwater Chapter JAKE's Event	\$250.00
Tallapoosa Longbeards Chapter JAKE's Event	\$250.00
2013 National Leadership Conference volunteer participation	\$5,080.95

### ALABAMA SUPER FUND PROJECTS - WMAS, SEED SUBSIDY, REWARDS, & RESEARCH

Public Land Purchase appraisal	\$1,000.00
Habitat Equipment (4 pieces)	\$16,245.11
Public Land Wildlife Openings for brood-rearing habitat (4 total)	\$12,381.26
Public Land Prescribed Burns (3 total)	\$4,572.50
Conservation Easements created (3 total)	\$3,440.83
Invasive/Exotic Vegetation Control	\$1,385.50
2014 Seed Subsidy Program	\$29,926.24
Hunting Violation Reward Payments	\$500.00
Auburn University, NWTF and ALDCNR Research Project	\$10,000.00

<b>Total</b>	<b>\$113,952.59</b>
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## 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 the past eight 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 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. 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



Billy Pope

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. The program is now entering its 11th year and continues to grow.

Approximately 360 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 360 schools means approximately 50,000 Alabama school children are being exposed to archery programming each year. The NWTF state chapter has provided funding to assist many of these schools in launching their NASP.

With the help from organizations such as the NWTF and volunteers across the state, we have grown from 200 youth attending the first state championship in 2004 to more than 1,200 participating in 2014. This year's event will be held April 10, 2015. Roughly 2,000 people will attend the state event including students, teachers, parents, volunteers and spectators. And once again, it would not be possible without the generous support of the Alabama Chapter of the NWTF. ♡

# SAVE THE HABITAT. SAVE THE HUNT.



The NWTF has recently unveiled its plan to save the habitat and save the hunt. This is an exciting time in our organization, as we are now all moving toward a goal. When all staff, volunteers, and partners work together toward 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 10 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.**

Each state across the country plays a role in this new initiative. In Alabama, we have finalized a plan that outlines exactly the role we are committed to playing in this dignified task. With assistance from other NWTF staff and executives across the country, as well as help from ADCNR, and other dedicated volunteers, we have produced several strategies geared to create opportunities that will help us to achieve our desired goals.

One of those strategies involves hosting Save the Habitat. Save the Hunt. District Workshops. We have currently hosted eight of these workshops in total across all regions of our state, and Alabama's strategic plan is being introduced to all of our volunteers. As we pursue the noble goals of this initiative, it is imperative that we all advance these goals in unison as one common voice that is the NWTF! These workshops serve to promote our states involvement in the initiative, arm our volunteers with strategies, and generate new ideas our outlooks on how we can bolster the values that are encompasses by the initiative

Be on the lookout for more information regarding this initiative in the future, as it is gaining momentum exponentially. Every individual with interest in conservation plays a major part in this. It is the desire of NWTF to put its faith in the volunteer force we have to put their passion into this mission, because without the persistence of our volunteer base, these goals shall never be attainable. ✎



# RESEARCH ON TURKEY POPULATION IN ALABAMA

*James B. Grand, Unit Leader, U.S. Geological Survey,  
Alabama Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, Auburn University, Alabama*

*Amy L Silvano, Research Associate, Auburn University,  
Alabama Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, Auburn University, Alabama*

In 2015, the Alabama Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at Auburn University and the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) will begin the most comprehensive and long-term study of Eastern wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo silvestris*) populations ever conducted in the state using funds provided by Auburn University, ADCNR, federal assistance to wildlife restoration, and the Alabama Chapter of NWTF. In this project, Alabama Unit staff and graduate students will be capturing and marking turkeys with radio-transmitters and leg bands to measure movement, survival and production rates in the three most significant landscapes in the state. The landscapes chosen for study are the hardwood forests and fertile valleys around J.D. Martin Skyline WMA, the rugged mixed-pine hardwood forests in an around Oakmulgee WMA, and the intensively managed pine forests surrounding Scotch WMA.

These areas were chosen for study not only because of the differences in habitat, but because of the potential differences in the rates that affect the size, structure and sustainability their turkey populations. The research results will be used to provide improved forecasts of turkey populations for all areas of the state. With an estimated population of more than 400,000 birds and more than 50,000 hunters pursuing them, Eastern wild turkeys are unquestionably the most important game bird in Alabama. Over the long-term, the number and harvest of turkeys have increased, but there is the perception that turkey populations have declined during the last decade.

Annually, the ADCNR makes recommendations on turkey seasons and bag limits that may affect future populations. When making those recommendations, the agency wants to consider

the potential effects of regulations on the size and structure of future turkey populations because their goal is to achieve a satisfactory balance between the number of adult gobblers in the population and the desired level of harvest. Predicting the effects of harvest regulations on turkey populations requires a model

that can be used to forecast populations. These types of forecasts, similar to forecasts about hurricane landfall, need to include a measure of our confidence in them. The best way to improve those forecasts and thereby improve turkey management is through applied research, and monitoring the effects of management on turkey populations. In the future, experimental changes to bag limits and seasons may be used to enhance ADCNR's ability to forecast the effects of

regulations on turkey populations.

Working with ADCNR biologists, the Alabama Unit developed a prototype for forecasting the effects of harvest management on turkey populations. In the absence of recent research results, the prototype incorporates a population model based on best guesstimates of survival and production rates for Alabama turkeys, as well as the effects of changes to seasons and bag limits. Developing prototypes such as this one is the first step in identifying critical information needed to make reliable forecasts that could guide management recommendations. Consequently, the information needed to improve forecasts of turkey populations determined the objectives for the research project. In the future, results from this ambitious research project will be used to update the prototype and will presumably lead to better, more reliable forecasts of turkey populations further improving ADCNR's ability to manage Alabama turkey populations for public benefit. ♡

Richard Curtain





# WILD TURKEY BOOK UPDATE

*By David Rainer, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources*

When it comes to wild turkey hunting, I must admit that I'm severely afflicted with what some people term as a "disease."

Steve Barnett would also be diagnosed with the same malady, which makes the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division wildlife biologist the perfect candidate to head a team to author the update of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources publication on the Eastern wild turkey in our state.

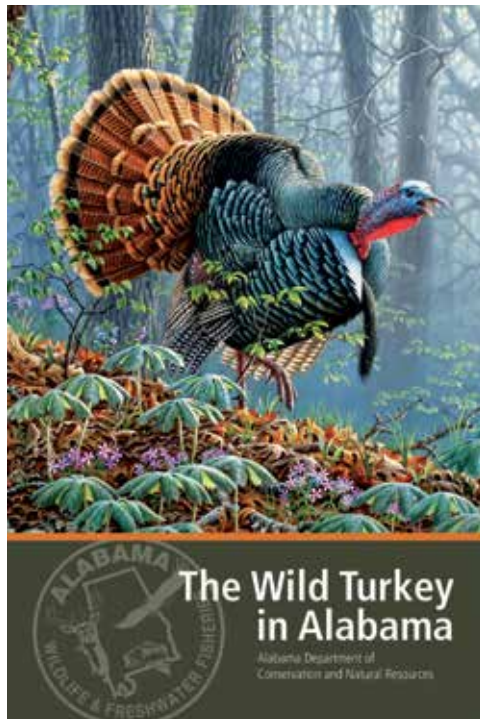
The result is *The Wild Turkey in Alabama*, a 106-page book that provides a wide variety of information about the wily bird. Chapters in the book include: Physical Characteristics; Behavior: Food Habits and Nutrition; Diseases, Parasites and Toxins; Predators; Population Dynamics; Population Management; Research and Surveys; Habitat Management; and Wild Turkey Management Guidelines for Landowners.

Barnett was looking for help to work on the book when he found a co-author very close to home – actually in his home.

"Just to get a first draft of the manuscript took about two years," he said. "You don't drop everything else you do to work on a book. What I had to do was take the material home and work on it at the house. Initially, we checked to see if anybody else on our staff wanted to co-author the book. As it turned out, my wife, Victoria, volunteered because she knew it was going to be quite time-consuming. She's a wildlife biologist and a good writer, too. I think it worked out for the best."

Because the last turkey book was more than 30 years old, the Barnett's decided an in-depth approach was best.

"We felt like we needed something pretty comprehensive – biology, restoration efforts and a lot of history on where we've been and where we are today," Steve said. "We felt it was important to include management information for the landowners and hunting clubs to use.



"Victoria and I wanted to strike a balance of technical and non-technical information that would appeal to a broad audience and hold their attention. That was the way we envisioned the final product. As far as blending the non-technical information with the technical, we did relate hunting scenarios where the particular biology would apply. We thought those would hold a person's interest, especially the turkey hunter, if we included those tidbits. With me being a hardcore turkey hunter and wildlife biologist, I thought that the average turkey hunter could relate to that type of insight."

Barnett admits that landowners and hunting clubs are likely to benefit more from the book than your typical turkey hunter, although there is something for both.

"Landowners and even turkey hunters may gain a better understanding of wild turkey behavior, habitat preferences, nutritional requirements, and habitat management based on the information in the book," he said. "From managing grassy openings for newly hatched, 2-ounce poults to collecting harvest data on adult gobblers, life cycle events and related management applications are outlined.

"For the hunters, if they read about the biology and behavior of turkeys, there is good information on how a gobbler acts during the breeding season. I think a hunter can use that in set-ups, in

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# MANAGING WOODLANDS FOR WILD TURKEYS

*By Steven W. Barnett, Wildlife Biologist*

The one dominant feature in many landscapes that is often overlooked or underutilized in managing wild turkeys is the woodland habitat. So much emphasis is placed on wildlife openings and supplemental plantings that people may be lulled into the perception that planting food plots is all you need to do to manage wildlife.

Wildlife openings are very important to turkeys for nesting, brood rearing, foraging, and courtship displays, but on many properties, less than 1 percent of the total land base is managed in wildlife openings. In terms of the “big picture,” the entire landscape should be managed to provide the same benefits of a wildlife opening and much more. Let’s take a look at some wild turkey management applications for woodland habitat.

One of the most cost effective methods of improving woodlands for turkeys is controlled burning. When properly planned and executed, prescribed fire can promote more native forage plants and create more brood habitat for turkeys than other habitat enhancement techniques. Many native plant species important to turkeys, like grasses and legumes, have evolved with fire and respond well to it. Burning rotations vary depending on the site but average about three years for turkey management.

The most difficult part of burning is finding the optimum conditions including humidity, wind speed, wind direction and burn index. Some areas may not lend themselves to controlled burning. The purpose of a control burn determines when to burn. Winter burns are best for stimulating herbaceous growth, but growing season burns may be needed for dense brush control. Unless the land manager is certified in the use of prescribed fire, the expertise of the Alabama Forestry Commission or a private contractor is recommended.

Selective herbicides that are environmentally safe are becoming increasingly popular for habitat management. Products with the active ingredient imazapyr have proven effective in controlling hardwood brush without negatively affecting legumes. In addition, proper herbicide use can enhance seed-bearing plants’ ability to produce heavier and more nutritious seeds in the absence of competing brush. In treated areas, flowering plants will

thrive and attract insects, which in turn attract young turkeys, called poults. One application may last up to 10 years, making herbicide use cost effective. However, unlike prescribed fire, herbicides do not reduce the amount of dead wood nor recycle nutrients in the soil. Remember to follow the label instructions and be aware of the requirements for using certain herbicides.

Roll drum chopping, mulching, and mowing are also effective treatment methods but are not as cost effective as controlled burning or herbicides. A combination of roll drum chopping or mowing along with controlled burning or herbicides will improve the natural habitat for turkeys and result in less money spent planting wildlife openings.

Tree cutting can improve turkey habitat when wildlife needs are considered during the planning stages. Regardless of the type of tree harvest conducted, the most important thing to consider for wildlife is not the trees cut but the trees left. A wildlife friendly harvest will retain mast producers like oaks scattered throughout upland and bottomland sites. Trees that are removed will open up the canopy and allow sunlight to reach the forest floor and in conjunction with brush control methods, plants preferred by wild turkeys will emerge. Remember to leave snags and cavity-den trees for other wildlife.

In areas where oaks and other important wildlife trees are limited, planting is a good alternative. With the use of a tree planter or hand tools like a dibble bar, nut and fruit trees can be planted in areas clear of brush with sufficient sunlight. Field edges, roadsides, fencerows, windrows, and wildlife openings provide excellent sites. Plant a variety (remember the word diversity) of oaks and fruit trees. This ensures some food production if one or more types of trees fail in poor mast years. Trees to consider for turkeys and other wildlife species include a variety of oak, dogwood, chinkapin, hawthorn, persimmon and plum. Provide a mix of short- and long-term mast producers. A good rule of thumb to improve seedling survival is to purchase the largest and most vigorous nursery stock practical, use tree shelters and limit competition around the seedlings.

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# MANAGING FOR THREE-INCH TURKEYS

*By Ron Eakes, Certified Wildlife Biologist*

“Manage for a three-inch turkey? Have you lost your mind? I’m interested in 20-pound gobblers.” In order to grow a 20 pound gobbler you have to start with something, and that something is an egg that hatches into a fuzzy golf ball with toothpicks for legs; in other words, a poult about 3 inches tall.

During an average nesting season approximately half of all turkey nests initiated are lost, either as a result of nest predation or nest abandonment. Most years, approximately 50 percent of the poults that do hatch die as a result of starvation, exposure or predation within the first four to six weeks. With an average clutch size of 10-12 eggs, this means that for every nest laid, less than three poults ever reach the age of two months. With these facts in mind, managing nesting and brood range should be a primary concern for anyone interested in wild turkeys.

Turkeys are ground nesters and use a variety of cover types. Preferred nesting sites are most often associated with some form of dense cover including clearcuts, young pine plantations, blackberry or plum thickets, hedgerows, roadsides, old fields or similar habitats. These areas provide dense cover in which hens can hide their nests from potential predators and provide protection during inclement weather.

Turkeys will nest in more open areas including mature woodlands but tend to suffer greater nest losses than those using thicker cover. Wild turkey brood range is often described as grassy forest openings but actually can include pastures, fields, croplands, orchards, logging decks, roadsides, power line and gas line right of ways, and even open forest stands or savannas. High quality brood range usually contains a mixture of grasses, broadleaf weeds and forbs and scattered low growing woody vegetation. These areas are extremely attractive to insects, spiders and other invertebrates that are the primary food source for young poults. Additionally, the height of the vegetation is an important component of good brood range. Vegetation should average from 10-30 inches tall; this provides concealment for young poults as they feed, while allowing adult hens a clear view of the surrounding area and any approaching predators.

Brood range can include a mixture of natural openings and herbaceous plant communities as well as supplemental openings

planted in species such as millets, sunflowers or clovers. Heavy turf forming grasses such as fescue or Bermuda should be avoided. Turf forming grasses typically become too thick to provide good brood range, especially for young poults. Developing linear openings by planting woods road shoulders or roadbeds that are seldom used can be an effective technique when establishing brood range either with native plant communities or supplemental plantings.

Mowing, disking, fertilizing and/or burning natural openings should be incorporated into any wild turkey brood management plan to improve plant species diversity, vegetative structure and reduce supplemental planting costs. Native openings should be disked every two-to-three years to maintain plant growth desirable for wild turkeys and reduce excessive encroachment by woody species. Fall and winter disking encourages heavy seed producing annual plants. April disking promotes native grasses, while June disking favors plants that attract insects and produce seed. Mowing on a three-year cycle will encourage the growth of blackberry, greenbriar and other soft mast producers used by both poults and adults. Prescribed burning, during January through early March, on a three-year cycle also can be used to maintain natural openings.

Openings, natural or planted, should be irregular shaped and at least 1 acre in size. A minimum of 5-10 percent of the total land acreage should be maintained in openings, but this can be as much as 25 to even 50 percent if properly distributed and maintained.

Selective herbicides with the active ingredient imazapyr have proven effective in controlling hardwood brush without affecting legumes. Proper herbicide use can enhance seed-bearing plants’ ability to produce heavier and more nutritious seeds in the absence of competing brush. In treated areas, an abundance of native forbs and legumes will attract insects, which in turn attract turkey broods. One application of a selective herbicide may last up to 10 years, making its use a cost effective management tool. However, unlike prescribed fire, herbicides do not reduce

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## Wild Turkey Book Update – (Continued)

choosing a location in anticipation of where a gobbler will go for a strut zone.”

Barnett credits some of his obsession with turkeys to his DNA.

“I come from a long generation of turkey hunters from Winston County,” he said. “Back in the early 1900s, there were turkey populations along the Alabama and Tombigbee rivers and there was a pocket of turkeys in Winston County. I know my great-grandfather hunted turkeys in Winston County along Clear Creek. There were moonshine stills, too, but there were also wild turkeys.”

He also knows that Alabama’s dedicated turkey hunters have educated the Eastern wild turkey within our borders to the point that taking a gobbler in Alabama elevates the hunter to an elite status.

I’ve always said that if a hunter can fool a turkey in Alabama, he or she can be successful anywhere in the nation.

“I’ll go a step further,” Barnett said. “If you can call a turkey within range on public land in Alabama, you’re even better off – anywhere else in the world.”

Barnett said a formal, county-by-county survey of Wildlife Division staff indicates there are an estimated 400,000 wild turkeys in Alabama.

“The word estimate needs to be emphasized,” he said. “All we have is observational information. What really matters is what enters the fall population. You’re going to lose about 70 percent of what hatched in the spring or eggs to nest predators like raccoons. Those first few weeks of survival as poults are obviously very important. If they can survive those 10-12 days until they can fly up to roost, then they have a better chance. They’re just so vulnerable during that time.

Whether there are turkeys on a particular piece of property depends largely on how much work was put into management for turkeys, Barnett said.

“If you look property by property, it all hinges on active management – the person who is doing timber management, controlled burning, making wildlife openings,” he said. “If they’re focusing on brood habitat, managing for grassy openings that will provide food and cover for the brood, they’re going to have turkeys.

“If the next-door neighbor doesn’t have any active management plan – unbroken, unmanaged woodlands – if that neighbor is a turkey hunter most of the gobbling he’s going to hear will be across the property line.” ✎

**Contact your district office to acquire your copy of *The Wild Turkey in Alabama*. See page 6 for contact information.**

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## Managing Woodlands for Wild Turkey – (Continued)

A common limiting factor to wild turkey populations is brood habitat. Poults survival will increase when ample insect-producing areas are available in openings, field roads and forest settings. The less distance a hen takes her brood to bugging areas, the fewer poults she will lose. These production areas have a twofold purpose by providing food and cover for the hens and poults. Fewer poult losses due to predators will occur when brood habitat is sufficient. Grassy openings should be dispersed throughout

the landscape. Roads that are daylighted and closed to vehicles during the brood-rearing season are excellent choices for grasses and legumes. A road’s meandering effect and habitat coverage provides prime brood-rearing areas.

By applying these woodland management techniques across the entire landscape, wild turkey habitats as well as population levels will greatly improve. It requires much more than food plots for wild turkeys to thrive. ✎

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## Managing for Three-Inch Turkeys – (Continued)

the amount of dead wood nor recycle nutrients into the soil.

Additionally, roller drum chopping and mowing are effective treatment methods for creating or maintaining wild turkey brood range, but are not as cost effective as controlled burning or herbicides. A combination of roll drum chopping or mowing along with herbicide application and controlled burning will im-

prove the natural habitat and brood range for turkeys and result in less time and money spent planting supplemental openings.

Although often overlooked, managing for wild turkey nesting cover and brood range are critical components in managing and enhancing wild turkey populations. ✎

# 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: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

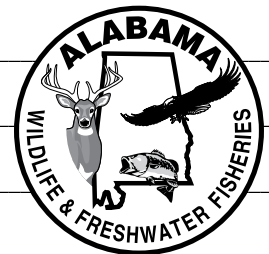
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Additional Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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# 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.



If you would like to download a First Harvest certificate, visit [www.outdooralabama.com/hunting](http://www.outdooralabama.com/hunting).





# Hey, Tommy

*By Joel D. Glover*

Hey Tommy, yeah Tom. I got a plan for in the morning. What's that? Let's roost just across the property line, me on the west and you on the east. When he starts hooting in the morning, I'll gobble. Once he gets within about 150 yards, I'll double gobble. Then I'll shut up and you start gobbling. I mean getting after it with some doubles and maybe a triple. When he starts toward you I'm going to step off the limb and follow him. Once he gets about 200 yards from you, you fly down and gobble. When he sets up and starts calling, I'm going to sneak in behind him and putt really loud, when I do you gobble. Remember stay out at least 75 yards cause I saw him loading his gun with some of those long range shells the other morning when he parked up under me. Then you start drumming really loud. He'll think you are coming in. You drum three or four times and shut up. Then I'll give it a minute or two and I'll drum behind him. He'll think you've circled him and he'll start trying to turn around and when he does I'll putt and fly off.

In a little while he will be dejected and head for the truck. Just before he gets there, I'll gobble just across the field from his truck. He'll take that trail down by the creek and set up in the corner. I'll gobble a couple of times while he is trying to get over there. Once he is set up. You need to gobble from the other side of his truck. He'll keep calling to me but I won't answer. You keep gobbling. When he quits calling, he'll be headed back toward you and his truck. You quit gobbling. I'll wait until he gets almost to his truck and then I'll set down out in the field about 40 yards from where he was last set up. When I see him walking up to the truck, I'll gobble. When he looks over I'll take off running. Surely that will get him to give up and leave us alone for a while. We'll meet up over at the chufa patch with Tammy and Susie. Okay, you got it?

This is not a fictional musing. This is actually what happened to me on April 28, 2012. That was the day I broke the stock off my shotgun. ✖



# DO YOUR PART GAME CHECK

Hunter participation in the Alabama Game Check Program is crucial to its success.

With Game Check, we can work together to effectively manage wildlife in Alabama for generations to come.

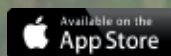


**THREE  
WAYS TO  
DO YOUR  
PART!**



Three Easy ways to report your harvest...

- 1 Outdoor Alabama App
- 2 OutdoorAlabama.com
- 3 1-800-888-7690



Learn more at [OutdoorAlabama.com/gamecheck](http://OutdoorAlabama.com/gamecheck)