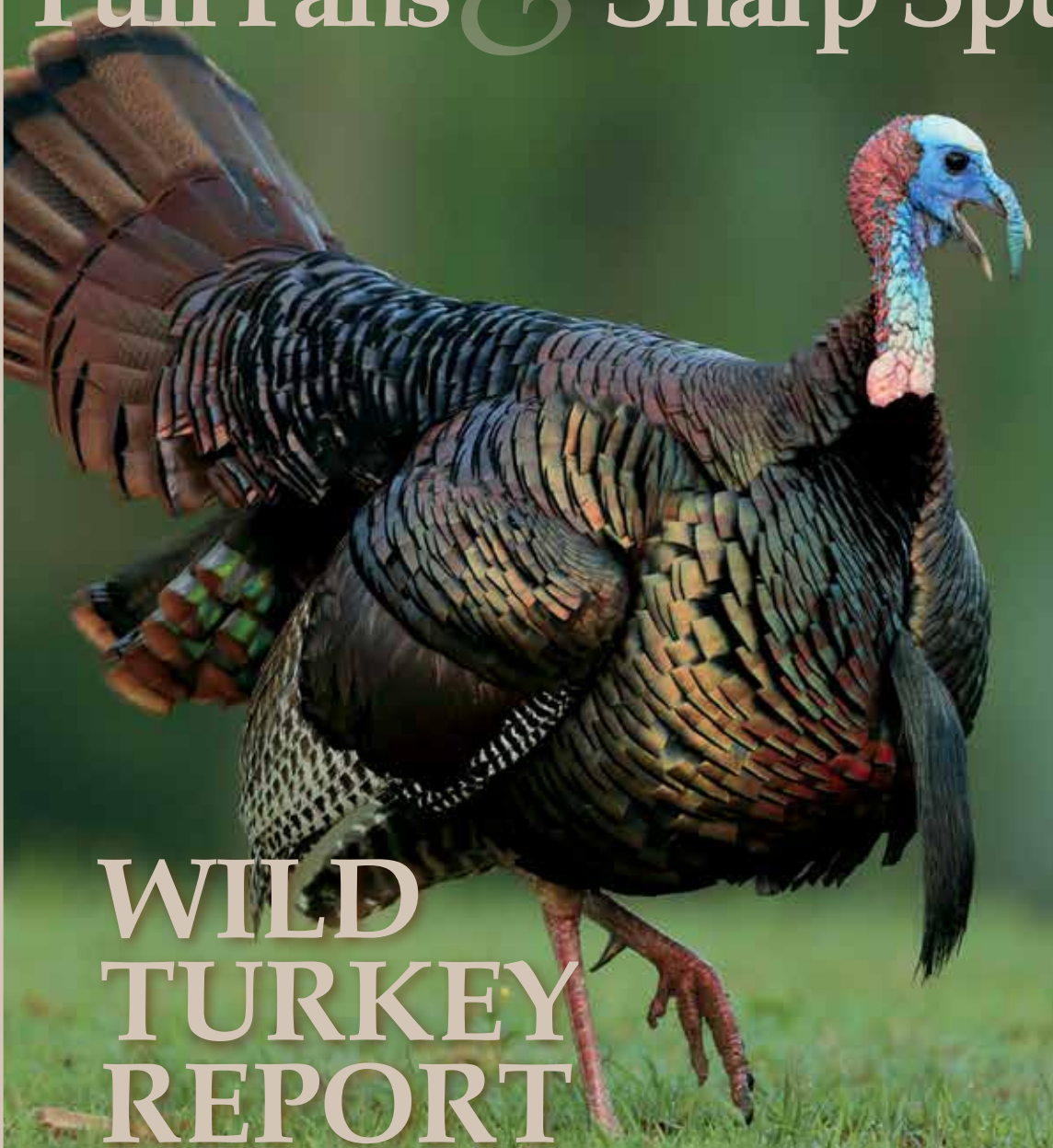




A L A B A M A

Full Fans & Sharp Spurs



WILD TURKEY REPORT *2015*

Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources





2015 ALABAMA WILD TURKEY REPORT

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

In 2015 we saw a large increase in the avid turkey hunter survey participation. We encourage all turkey hunters to become partners with the ADCNR in the conservation and management of Alabama's wild turkeys. Your participation in the avid turkey hunter survey is key to providing vital information used to better manage the resource. Any avid turkey hunter who would like to participate in the survey should contact Steve Barnett, Alabama Turkey Project Leader, at steve.barnett@dcnr.alabama.gov, or Joel Glover at joel.glover@dcnr.alabama.gov.

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 ADCNR 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 who hunt turkeys illegally. Anyone with information on illegal turkey hunting in Alabama should call 1-800-GameWatch. ♡

Cover Photo: Steve Gullledge



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division is pleased to share the second edition of the Wild Turkey Program Report, *Full Fans & Sharp Spurs*. In these pages are 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, over time, will reveal trends in Alabama's wild turkey population. We hope you enjoy this data and extend to you an invitation to assist us in collecting data. Directions on how you can assist are found inside.

This publication is a joint venture with the Alabama Chapter of 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 former Wildlife Section Assistant Chief Ray Metzler, the ADCNR Information Technology and Information and Education staffs and the members of the Alabama Wild Turkey Committee.

The data in this report was provided by WFF Division staff, other agency personnel, private landowners and turkey hunters from across the state. It would not be possible without your continued support.

Thank you all.

Steve Barnett and Joel D. Glover

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www.outdooralabama.com



Robert Bentley – *Governor*

This second annual *Full Fans & Sharp Spurs* publication continues to document information about Alabama's wild turkey resource.

As the agency responsible for managing Alabama's wildlife resources, the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources works not only for hunters and anglers, but also for everyone who values our state's game and nongame species. I commend them for their leadership and diligence to this important work.



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

In the early 20th century, the number of Eastern wild turkey in Alabama was nothing to brag about. Trapping and relocation efforts managed to give the turkey population new life, and the wild turkey responded by expanding to unprecedented numbers as we entered the 21st century.

As with all wildlife, turkey populations go through periods of peaks and valleys. Currently, the population seems to be heading into a valley throughout the Southeast. Proper wildlife management keeps those valleys from becoming too deep.

That is why the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division has made it a priority to collect all the information possible about turkey populations and activities.

This second annual *Full Fans & Sharp Spurs* publication is the product of efforts that will give wildlife managers and turkey hunters the information needed to ensure this premier big-game species remains available for future generations to pursue.

If you haven't already done so, please make plans to join us for some of the best turkey hunting you will ever experience.



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

The 2015 turkey season was as bad as I've experienced in over a decade and I don't think I was alone. Bad weather and lack of time due to work commitments were the causes of my terrible season. However, many people felt that turkey numbers were down as well. That is the beauty of this publication. We finally have facts, not just speculation as to what is happening with our turkey population.

I want to thank our Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries staff and especially the landowner and hunter volunteers who are assisting us in gathering the much-needed data we require to more effectively manage our turkey population.

I've got a feeling that 2016 will be an incredible season. I know I'm looking forward to it!



Steve Gullledge



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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, Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries (WFF) replenished and bolstered wild turkey numbers throughout Alabama and in other states as well.

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

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

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

These wildlife biologists have conducted stakeholder meetings to solicit input from hunters and have met extensively with researchers from Auburn University. These collaborations have resulted in a Wild Turkey Research Project on a scale never attempted in Alabama. We are measuring survival, productivity and movements of turkeys in the three most significant landscapes for turkey populations in the state. This information will provide valuable insights for future wild turkey management. Working together, we hope to 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
Northport, AL 35476
205-339-5716 (*Northport*)
334-289-8030 (*Demopolis*)
dcnr.d3wff@dcnr.alabama.gov



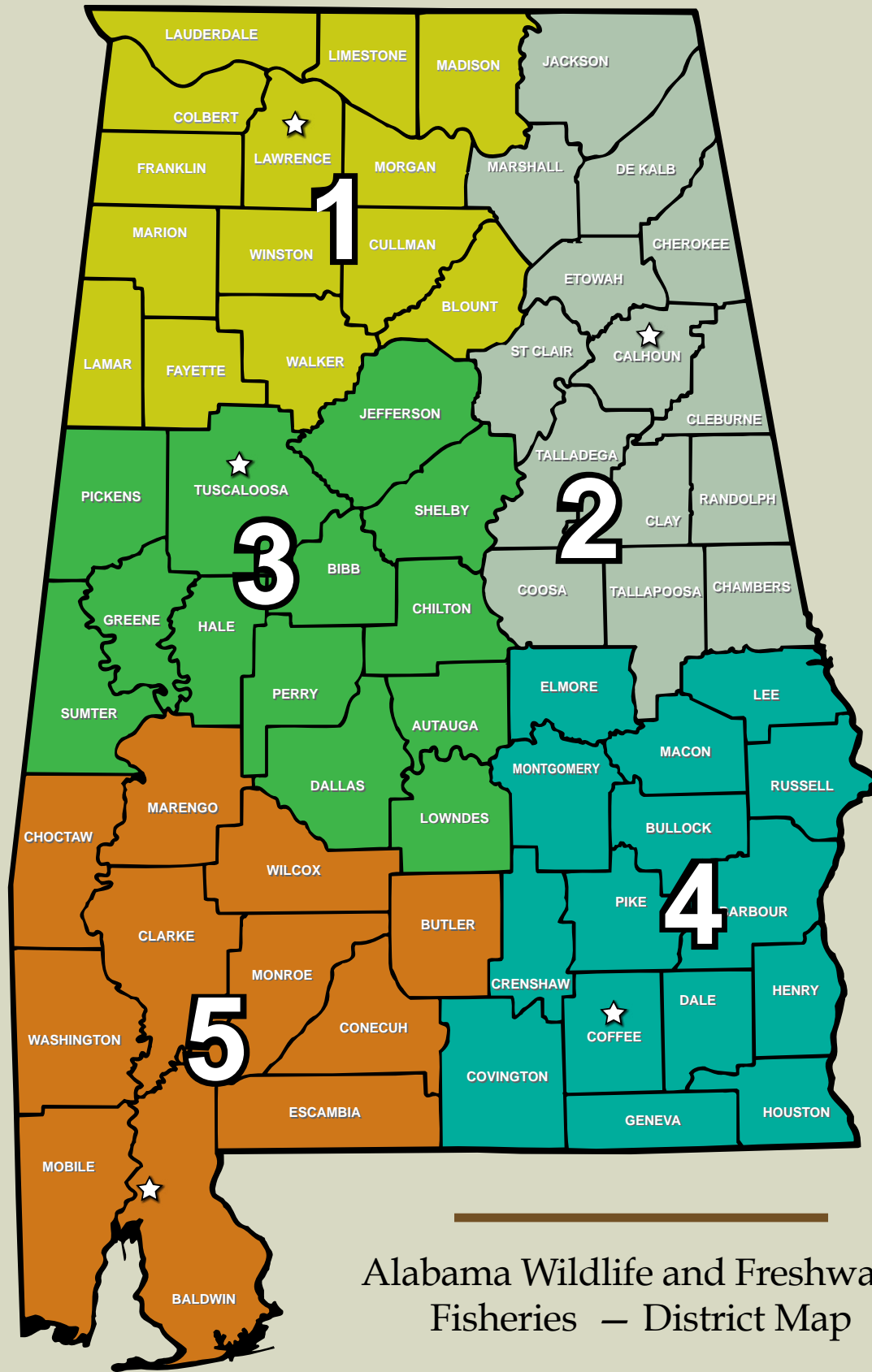
District 4

3520 Plaza Drive
Enterprise, AL 36330
334-347-1298
dcnr.d4wff@dcnr.alabama.gov



District 5

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



Alabama Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries – District Map

ADCNR COMMITTEE MEMBERS



District 1 Representative

Matt Brock



Matt Brock is from Fayette Alabama. He is an avid wild turkey and white-tailed deer hunter, but enjoys a few days of small game hunting each year. He started out 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. He obtained a B.S. degree in Wildlife Science from Mississippi State University in 2007. Upon graduation, 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 AL and MS through the Longleaf Pine Initiative working through the National Wild Turkey Federation and the NRCS. In December of 2011 he began employment with the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division of AL DCNR as a Wildlife Biologist on Black Warrior WMA. He is now the North Alabama Technical Assistance Biologist, assisting landowners and DMAP cooperators with wildlife management recommendations and providing technical assistance to other programs. 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 wife, Kerin, and their three children Luke, John, and Savanna.



District 2 Representative

Joel D. Glover



Joel D. Glover is a Certified Wildlife Biologist® and has been employed by the Alabama Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division for 29 years. Joel served as the Area Biologist on the Coosa Wildlife Management Area for more than 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 an 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 and has worked extensively

with the TREASURE Forest program across the state. He is currently the state assistant turkey project leader and serves as a member for the National Wild Turkey Federation Technical Committee and on the Southeast Wild Turkey Working Group.

Joel enjoys writing human interest and wildlife articles and nature photography. His articles and photos have appeared in numerous publications. He has authored many articles concerning his passion, turkey hunting. He believes that 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 grew up hunting and fishing in northeast Alabama. His love for the outdoors motivated him to pursue a bachelor's degree in Wildlife Science and a degree in Fisheries and Allied Aquaculture. He graduated from Auburn University in 2008. Justin began his career with the ADCNR Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries on the David K. Nelson Wildlife Management Area in Demopolis, Alabama, as an Area Biologist.

As a member of the Alabama Wild Turkey Management Committee, Justin 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 hunting, as he does with his children, and enjoy hunting as he did growing up.



District 4 Representative

Adam Pritchett



Adam Pritchett earned his B.S. degree in Wildlife Sciences from Auburn University in 2002. He began his career as a wildlife biologist with the Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries 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 wildlife on their property.

Adam has been a fanatical turkey hunter for 15 years and enjoys 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 Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries 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 11-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 National Wild Turkey Federation

and the Southeast Wild Turkey Working Group. Steve and his wife Victoria co-authored the 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, Alabama. "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."



NWTF & AWF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Alabama Wildlife Federation Representative

Kyle Marable



Kyle Marable has a B.S. in Wildlife Sciences from Auburn University and a M.S. in Wildlife and Fisheries Science from Mississippi State University. Between undergraduate and graduate schools, he primarily worked to establish upland quail habitat as part of a Habitat Improvement Team in western Kentucky.

Kyle's graduate research focused on movement,

cause-specific mortality, and resource selection in wild turkeys. His passion for ecosystem establishment, restoration, and management led him to join the Alabama Wildlife Federation as a Resource Stewardship Biologist. Kyle is excited to represent AWF on the turkey committee and work toward improving the habitat and understanding of wild turkeys in Alabama.

National Wild Turkey Federation Representative

Brandon Bobo



Brandon Bobo is a native of Oxford, Alabama. He received a bachelor's degree from Auburn University in Wildlife Sciences while working for the National Park Service.

Brandon served as the Mississippi Regional Biologist for the National Wild Turkey Federation before accepting the position of Alabama Regional Biologist position in September 2014. This allowed him to move back to his hometown of Oxford.

During the past three years, he has established working relationships with countless landowners in Mississippi and Alabama by performing site visits, giving technical assistance and provid-

ing management plans for their property. He assists in the coordination and presentation at landowner outreach field days regarding longleaf pine restoration, prescribed fire and wildlife habitat enhancement.

He has served on the Mississippi Longleaf Council and the Mississippi Prescribed Fire Council, the Alabama Turkey Committee and the Talladega Longleaf Implementation Team. In Brandon's job, he works with federal, state and local agencies and partners in Mississippi and Alabama.

He and wife Ashley have been married for four years and have a 3-year-old daughter named Karlie.

Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

HUNTING AND FISHING FUNDING FACTS



According to the 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation: *(Includes participants 16 years and older)*

STATE OF ALABAMA RESIDENT PARTICIPATION IN:

- Wildlife-Associated Recreation: 1.49 million; 41% of the state's population.
- Hunting and Fishing: 744,000, 20% of the state's population.
- Wildlife-Watching: 1.1 million, 29% of the state's population.

TOTAL NUMBER OF:

- Anglers fishing in Alabama: 683,000; of this, 473,000 (69%) were residents and 210,000 (31%) were non-residents.
- Hunters hunting in Alabama: 536,000; of this, 492,000 (92%) were residents and 44,000 (8%) were non-residents.

DID YOU KNOW...

Alabama is 7th in the nation for retail sales associated with hunting.

Alabama is 24th in the nation for retail sales associated with freshwater fishing.

Trip-Related Expenditures in 2011			
	Fishing	Hunting	Total
Food and Lodging	\$121,973,000	\$151,664,000	\$273,637,000
Transportation	78,970,000	160,803,000	239,773,000
Other Trip Costs	116,120,000	92,498,000	208,618,000
Total	\$317,063,000	\$404,965,000	\$722,028,000

Equipment Expenditures in 2011				
	Fishing	Hunting	Wildlife-Watching	Total
Equipment	\$127 Million	\$357 Million	\$668 Million	\$1.15 Billion

According to the 2011 Economic Impact Survey of Hunting and Freshwater Fishing in the United States:

Economic Impact of Hunting, Freshwater Fishing and Wildlife-Watching (The multiplier effect) includes all rounds of spending	Direct Expenditures from Hunting, Freshwater Fishing and Wildlife-Watching	State of Alabama and Local Tax Revenue from Hunting, Freshwater Fishing and Wildlife-Watching expenditures	Number of jobs supported by Hunting, Freshwater Fishing and Wildlife-Watching
Hunting: \$1.8B	Hunting: \$1.2B	Hunting: \$104M	Hunting: 27,257
Freshwater Fishing: \$780M	Freshwater Fishing: \$514M	Fishing: \$51M	Freshwater Fishing: 7,845
Wildlife-Watching: \$1.3B	Wildlife-Watching: \$734M	Wildlife-Watching: \$104M	Wildlife-Watching: 18,513

THANK YOU, MR. FRED



Tas Randle Jolly

If I were to ask you what Alabamian has had the greatest impact on wild turkeys in Alabama, I'm sure your mind would quickly go to some well-known names in turkey hunting circles. While Alabama is home to some talented turkey hunters who have brought notoriety to our state, we must not lose sight of the fact that without turkeys to hunt, springtime in Alabama would be much less enjoyable. While the fellow I speak of may not be well-known in the turkey hunting world, it is important to know that every turkey hunter in this state (and many in other states) owes a huge debt of gratitude to a humble conservation professional in south Alabama. Fred Pringle, "Mr. Fred" as he is affectionately known, has put forth a lifelong effort and commitment to providing Alabama hunters with some of the best wildlife populations in the nation. Through his dedicated efforts to restore wildlife populations and to mentor

other wildlife professionals in that effort he has been instrumental in creating the vast wildlife resources we enjoy today.

Mr. Pringle began his career with the Alabama Game and Fish Division on February 2, 1965, at the Fred T. Stimpson Wildlife Sanctuary. At that time, the sanctuary had been the source population for ongoing white-tailed deer restocking efforts for approximately 20 years. Activities at the sanctuary for his first few years of employment focused on trapping white-tailed deer to complete ongoing restocking efforts throughout the state. Fred and other personnel at the Fred T. Stimpson Sanctuary trapped and relocated approximately 700 deer for restocking efforts throughout the state.

Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, trapping and restocking turkeys to locations around Alabama was a primary focus of activities at the sanctuary. Fred personally trapped and restocked approximately 2,000 turkeys in Alabama. He trapped another 2,000 or so to be marked and released as part of various state and university research projects. Turkey trapping efforts continued through 2014, primarily to assist other state wildlife agencies in their turkey restoration programs.

The fruits of his labor during his early career benefited all deer and turkey hunters

in Alabama. The enjoyment that all hunters experience while spending time afield in a treestand or with your back against a big oak in the turkey woods would not be possible without his efforts during his early career. We all owe Fred a sincere, heartfelt "thank you" for providing us with the opportunity to enjoy Alabama's wonderful wildlife resources.

Fred attended the Alabama Police Academy located in Selma to better enable him to enforce game and fish laws and regulations during his normal work activities on the sanctuary as well as other areas in southwest Alabama. He served as a full-time law enforcement officer until 2014.

The Fred T. Stimpson Sanctuary became the Fred T. Stimpson Community Hunting Area approximately 5 to 6 years ago. Fred embraced the new role of the former sanctuary and worked diligently as it was opened up to youth deer hunting opportunities. He took great pride in being able to provide a location and quality hunting experience for participants of youth hunts.

Mr. Fred is a very humble man and has never sought recognition for his many contributions to the management and conservation of Alabama's wildlife resources. Although he would much rather sit in a blind and successfully deploy a cannon net over a flock of wild

turkeys than to receive an award for his life's work, contributions such as his should not and have not gone unnoticed. Mr. Fred has earned not only statewide recognition but also nationwide attention for his contributions to wildlife conservation. He received the National Wild Turkey Federation's prestigious Joe Kurz Wildlife Manager of the Year Award and was recently the recipient of the Alabama Wildlife Federation's Wildlife Conservationist of the Year Award.

Despite his modesty, he is a man that possesses a wealth of knowledge about many, many areas of conservation and this knowledge and his talents have benefited untold thousands of hunters and landowners across the entire state of Alabama.

He has been a great mentor for many young biologists. He has shared his knowledge of turkey trapping to great affect for those working on turkey related projects in which capture and handling of birds was necessary. Fred is cut from that cloth that is sadly uncommon this day and time. He has a work ethic and a manner of honest dealing that is sorely missing in today's culture. He is a southern gentleman of the finest sort and ironically, would blush at being described as such. He has worked tirelessly and preferred to do so in obscurity, recent awards of his accomplishments notwithstanding. He represents the best of those



Dennis Holt



Dennis Holt

Fred Pringle was instrumental in restocking efforts of both Eastern wild turkey and white-tailed deer in Alabama. During his career with the Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, he trapped approximately 4,000 turkeys at the Fred T. Stimpson Wildlife Sanctuary for restocking efforts and research projects.

who choose to dedicate their lives to wildlife and its conservation. While he may be well-known and revered in conservation circles, there are many across Alabama who do not know Fred but benefit from the quiet and steady works wrought by his hands. A great many of the wonderful memories made in the forests and fields by Alabama's hunters are due, in no small

part, to Fred's dedication to turkey and deer restocking work. Rarely do any of us, in any endeavor, have an opportunity to contribute in such a manner that is so long lived and so important. Fred is one such individual who can claim this honor – though surely he would never do so.

Thank you, Mr. Fred.



ALABAMA TURKEY SURVEYS



ALABAMA AVID TURKEY HUNTER SURVEY (2015 RESULT)

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 are asked to record observations from their hunts during the spring season. The survey was conducted again in 2015. The gobbling activity and observational data obtained will assist WFF wildlife biologists in monitoring turkey populations and 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 gobblers 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 2-year-old gobblers often lends itself to a good gobbling year. ♡



DISTRICT 1

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

Gobbling Activity and Observations

Cooperators in District 1 reported hearing 8,732 gobblers from 788 gobblers. On average, hunters heard 33 gobblers from 13 gobblers for each 10 hours hunted.

Gobblers seen per 100 hours hunted were 13.2. Jakes seen were 8.9 and hens observed per 100 hours were 30.9.

Reproduction

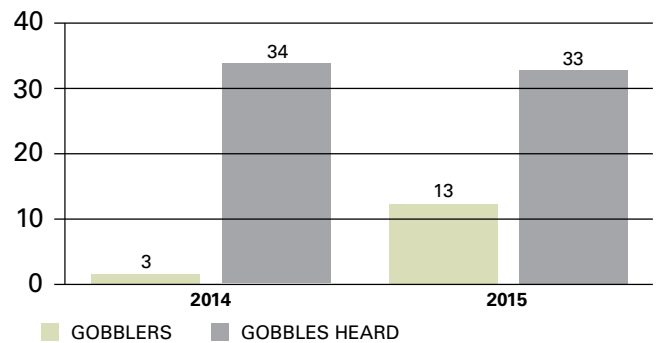
During the 2015 brood survey, cooperators in District 1 observed 1.60 poults per hen, which was up slightly from 2014. A total of 312 hens were observed. 175 hens (56%) successfully raised at least one poult for an average of 2.85 poults per hen with poults.

POULTS PER HEN: 1.60

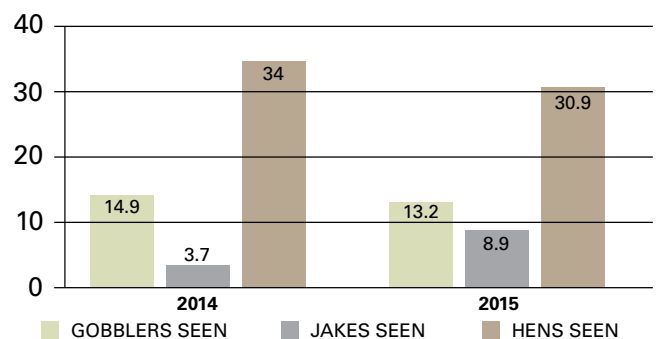
HENS WITH POULTS: 56%

POULTS PER HEN WITH POULTS: 2.85

Gobblers and Gobblers Heard per 10 Hours Hunted



Turkey Observations per 100 Hours Hunted



District 1 - Wildlife Management Areas that Provide Turkey Hunting

LAUDERDALE WMA

By Daniel Toole, WMA Wildlife Biologist

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

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

RIVERTON COMMUNITY HUNTING AREA

By Daniel Toole, WMA Wildlife Biologist

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

FREEDOM HILLS WMA

By Daniel Toole, WMA Wildlife Biologist

Freedom Hills WMA occupies approximately 33,000 acres in Colbert County acquired by the Forever Wild Program and WFF. The WMA contains tracts of mature hardwoods, dense loblolly pine plantations, shortleaf pine reforestation, and recently harvested areas. Hardwood drains of various sizes and shapes are interspersed throughout the WMA as streamside management zones among most of the plantation pines. Timber stand diversity provides a wide array of habitat types to benefit turkeys. Prescribed burning has been used in the past and is slated for increased use in 2015 and will continue to be implemented on a three-year interval to improve and maintain habitats beneficial to wild turkeys. In addition to the previously established wildlife openings, additional early successional units will be established and managed with prescribed fire, drum chopping, bush-hogging and disking. For more information on Freedom Hills WMA, contact the District 1 Wildlife office at 256-353-2634.

BLACK WARRIOR WMA

By Kevin Pugh, WMA Wildlife Biologist

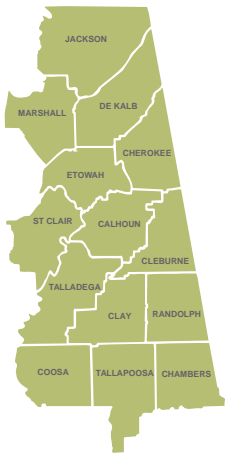
Black Warrior WMA provides public hunting opportunities through a long-standing cooperative partnership with the U.S. Forest Service. This WMA is located within Bankhead National Forest in Winston and Lawrence counties and encompasses

over 92,000 acres of U.S. Forest Service Lands, including the 26,000-acre Sipsey Wilderness. Mature oak/hickory and mixed hardwood/pine forest timber stand components dominate the landscape of the WMA. Recently, an effort to convert and restore loblolly pine stands to more naturally occurring shortleaf pine has been initiated. In addition, recent efforts to increase thinning operations in the pine stands has produced valuable early successional habitat for nesting and brood-rearing hens, which is of limited availability in this Forest. Prescribed fire is frequently implemented during both dormant and growing seasons to produce a wide array of vegetative diversity. Wildlife openings are planted with a variety of warm and cool season grains, peas and clovers in order to provide year-round supplemental food sources for wild turkey. For more information on the Black Warrior WMA, contact the District 1 Wildlife office at 256-353-2634.

SAM R. MURPHY WMA

By Kevin Pugh, WMA Wildlife Biologist

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



DISTRICT 2

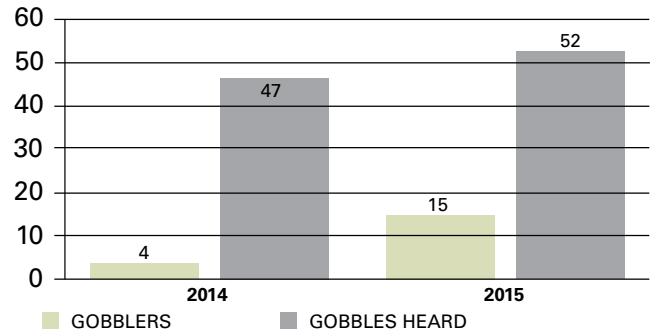
District 2 consists of 14 counties stretching from east central Alabama to the northeast corner of the state. It is a diverse linear area that encompasses the Piedmont, Interior Plateau, Appalachian Plateau, and Ridge and Valley Physiogeographic Regions. The lower portion of the district is mostly rolling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

Gobbling Activity and Observations

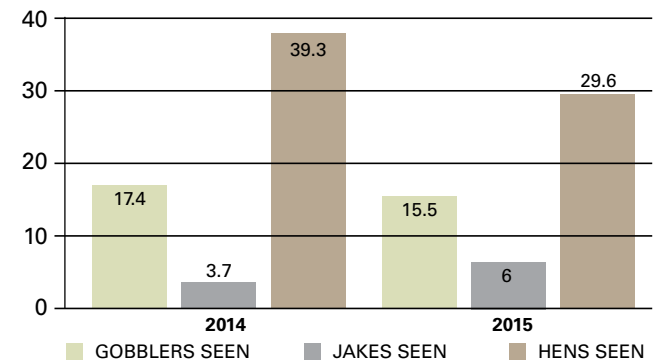
Cooperators in District 2 reported hearing 22,688 gobblers from 2286 gobblers. On average, hunters heard 52 gobblers from 15 gobblers for each 10 hours hunted.

Gobblers seen per 100 hours hunted were 15.5. Jakes seen were 6.0 and hens observed per 100 hours were 29.6.

Gobblers and Gobbles Heard per 10 Hours Hunted



Turkey Observations per 100 Hours Hunted



Reproduction

During the 2015 brood survey cooperators in District 2 observed 1.84 poult per hen, which was up slightly from 2014. A total of 393 hens were observed; 249 hens (63%) successfully raised at least one poult for an average of 2.90 poults per hen with poults.

POULTS PER HEN: 1.84

HENS WITH POULTS: 63%

POULTS PER HEN WITH POULTS: 2.90

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 totaling 26,934 acres, located between the towns of Scottsboro and Stevenson in Jackson County. These WMAs & Refuges are provided through a partnership between WFF and Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). One of the WMAs, Raccoon Creek WMA, contains a tract acquired by the Forever Wild Program named the Coon Gulf Tract. This Tract is comprised of 3,500 acres of mountainous terrain with mixed hardwood timber on the slopes and plantations of planted pines on the plateau. Native warm season grass openings occupy a couple hundred acres among the planted pines where prescribed fire is conducted on a two-year interval to manage and maintain

the plateau in suitable nesting and brood-rearing habitats for wild turkeys. Only the Coon Gulf Tract offers turkey hunting opportunities on the Jackson Co. WMAs & Refuges. For more information about the Coon Gulf Forever Wild Tract, contact the Jackson Co. WMAs and Refuges Office at 256-437-2788.

JAMES D. MARTIN – SKYLINE WMA

By Frank Allen, WMA Wildlife Biologist

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

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

Nature Conservancy, and WFF. The 60,732 acre area represents a varied collection of habitats including mature hardwood forests, upland pine stands, recently harvested areas, fallow areas, and agricultural fields. The area is actively managed for wild turkeys through prescribed burning, management of cool and warm season wildlife openings, timber stand improvements, native warm season grass establishment, and roadside bugging area improvements through fall disking and mowing. Habitat diversity across this north Alabama landscape allows for suitable nesting, brood-rearing and winter range habitats across the WMA. For additional information about hunting at James D. Martin-Skyline WMA, please contact the WMA biologist at 256-587-3114.

LITTLE RIVER WMA

By Brandon Howell, WMA Wildlife Biologist

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

CHOCOLOCCO WMA

By Brandon Howell, WMA Wildlife Biologist

Chocolocco WMA represents a continued cooperative conservation effort between the U.S. Forest Service, Alabama Forestry Commission, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and WFF. The WMA is located just east of the Anniston/ Oxford area in Calhoun and Cleburne counties and occupies over 56,000 acres. The WMA hosts a wide array of habitat types including longleaf pine stands, plantations of loblolly pine, mixed hardwood pine forests, upland and bottomland hardwoods and recently harvested areas. Timber stand management practices such as mid-rotation timber removal, thinning operations and prescribed burning all make for a considerable contribution to the wild turkey populations residing on the Chocolocco WMA. These management strategies have greatly increased the number of turkeys in the past two decades and will likely continue due to our valuable cooperative partnerships. For more information on the WMA, contact the District Office at 256-435-5422.

HOLLINS WMA

By Steven Mitchell, WMA Wildlife Biologist

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

COOSA WMA

By Steven Mitchell, WMA Wildlife Biologist

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



DISTRICT 3

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 20,047 gobblers from 1,917 gobblers. On average, hunters heard 41 gobblers from 14 gobblers for each 10 hours hunted.

Gobblers seen per 100 hours hunted were 14.2. Jakes seen were 6.4 and hens observed per 100 hours were 27.4.

Reproduction

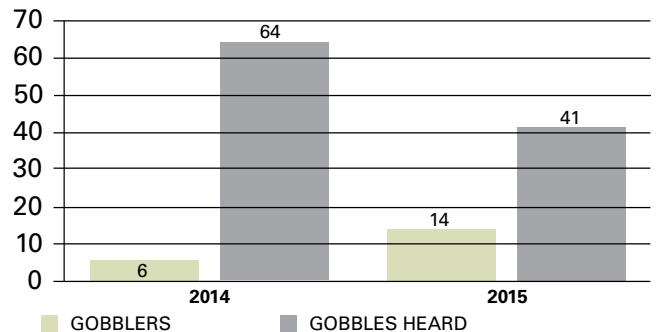
During the 2015 brood survey cooperators in District 3 observed 2.16 poults per hen, which was down slightly from 2014. A total of 179 hens were observed; 95 hens (53%) successfully raised at least one poult for an average of 4.07 poults per hen with poults.

POULTS PER HEN: 2.16

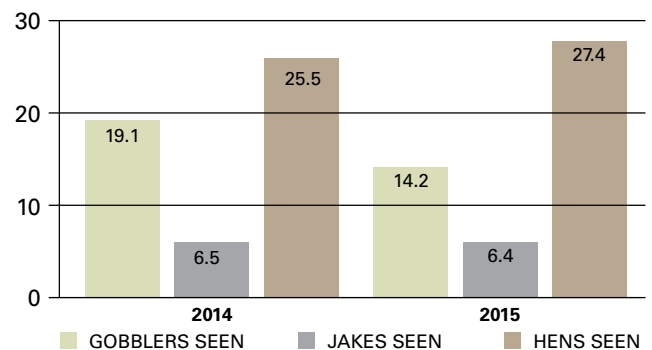
HENS WITH POULTS: 53%

POULTS PER HEN WITH POULTS: 4.07

Gobblers and Gobblers Heard per 10 Hours Hunted



Turkey Observations per 100 Hours Hunted



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. Hunting rights on this 33,280 acre tract were secured by the Forever Wild Program from Molpus Timberlands for WFF to manage and offer public hunting opportunities. The terrain is very steep and rugged, as this area represents the southern end of the Appalachian Mountains. Molpus Timberlands primarily manages the loblolly pine stands on the WMA as a commercial forest with timber stand ages ranging from recently harvested to 25 years of growth. Stream-side management zones are scattered and interspersed throughout the property and primarily consist of older aged hardwoods.

Roughly 40 wildlife openings are planted annually for both cool and warm season supplemental forage for wild turkeys. For more information on hunting the Mulberry Fork WMA, please contact the District III Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Office at 205-339-5716.

WILLIAM R. IRELAND, SR. — CAHABA RIVER WMA

By Chas Moore, WMA Wildlife Biologist

William R. Ireland, Sr.-Cahaba River WMA lies along the Cahaba River in central Alabama in Shelby and Bibb Counties near the towns of Helena, Montevallo, and West Blocton. The WMA

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

encompasses a total land acreage of 40,738 acres. Molpus Timberlands owns 27,894 acres in which hunting rights have been acquired through the Forever Wild Program with WFF managing the hunting programs. Other valuable cooperative land-owning partners include Hancock Forest Management (5,585 acres), RMS (3,070 acres), and USX (689 acres). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service owns another 3,500 acres, known as the Cahaba River National Wildlife Refuge, and is included in the WMA. The terrain throughout the area is very steep, rocky, and rugged. The uplands are typically plantation pine stands managed on a 25-30 year rotation with older stands typically being thinned. Streamside management zones are abundant along the many creeks that feed into the Cahaba River and are comprised of older aged hardwoods. Approximately 80 wildlife openings are managed in cool season and warm season forage crops to benefit native wildlife of the WMA and are scattered throughout the area. For more information on William R. Ireland, Sr.-Cahaba River WMA, contact the District III Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Office at 205-339-5716.

OAKMULGEE WMA

By Jeff Makemson, WMA Wildlife Biologist

Oakmulgee Wildlife Management Area represents the oldest WMA in Alabama, established in 1937 as a valued cooperative partnership with the U.S. Forest Service. The WMA consists of 45,000 acres located in Bibb, Hale, Perry and Tuscaloosa Counties in west central Alabama. The terrain is reminiscent of the landscape just north of the fall line with its moderate to steep rolling hills. Longleaf pine stands dominate the upland ridges with mature hardwoods in the bottomlands. Following U.S. Forest Service requirements to manage for the Red-cockaded Woodpecker, pine stands are thinned to a park-like appearance and burned on a three- to five-year rotation. This forest management regime is quite conducive for creating ideal nesting and brood rearing habitat for wild turkeys. More than 100 wildlife openings are planted and maintained in a variety of warm and cool season forages. For more information on Oakmulgee WMA, contact the District III Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries Office at 205-339-5716.

LOWNDES WMA

By Chris Jaworowski, WMA Wildlife Biologist

Lowndes WMA encompasses 15,920 acres acquired as a cooperative partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

the Forever Wild Program, and WFF to provide public hunting opportunities and other outdoor recreational activities. Special thanks go out to our partners, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Forever Wild Program, for supplying funding, equipment, assistance with wildlife management activities, and Lowndes WMA land acquisitions. Lowndes WMA is located in the northwest corner of Lowndes County approximately 4 miles northwest of the town of White Hall and 30 miles west of Montgomery. Lowndes WMA lies along the Alabama River and consists of fallow agricultural fields, hardwood river bottoms, swamp drainages, and mixed pine hardwood stands. Approximately 6,200 acres of fallow agricultural fields have been replanted with a mix of hardwood species. Permanent wildlife openings are scattered throughout the WMA and planted in a variety of small grains and clovers 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 wildlife species. Other wildlife management practices that benefit wild turkey populations include mowing, strip disking, and selective timber harvests. For more information on hunting on Lowndes WMA, call the District III Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries office at (205) 339-5716.

DAVID K. NELSON WMA

By Justin Brock, WMA Wildlife Biologist

David K. Nelson WMA is located at the confluence of Tombigbee and Black Warrior rivers near Demopolis, Alabama. The funding for the land acquisition and management support is provided by our cooperative partner in conservation, the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. The WMA is composed of nine tracts of land of various sizes comprising 8,557 deeded acres of primarily bottomland hardwood forest. While the majority of the WMA is occupied by alluvial river floodplains and bottomland hardwoods, some acreage is elevated sufficiently to be managed in pine stands and native warm season grasses. Numerous wildlife openings can be found scattered throughout the area planted in a collection of warm and cool season mixtures. Only the 2,500 acre Damsite Tract is accessible by vehicle. The remaining eight tracts can only be accessed by boat. For more information on hunting on David K. Nelson WMA, call the District III Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries office at (334) 289-8030. ♡



DISTRICT 4

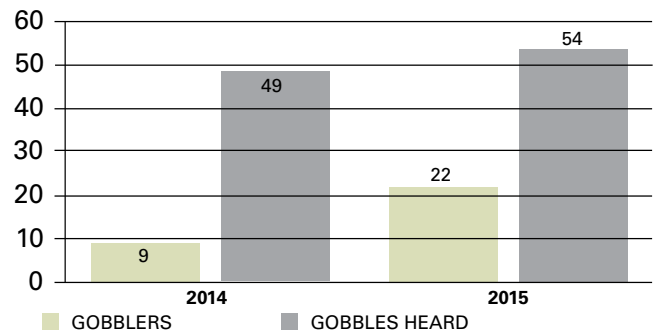
This region consists of 15 counties in the southeastern corner of Alabama. This region has four eco-regions: piedmont, coastal plain, black belt and lower coastal plain. The piedmont area is located on the northern fringe of the region and is mostly mixed pine-hardwood forest type with rocky mountainous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

Gobbling Activity and Observations

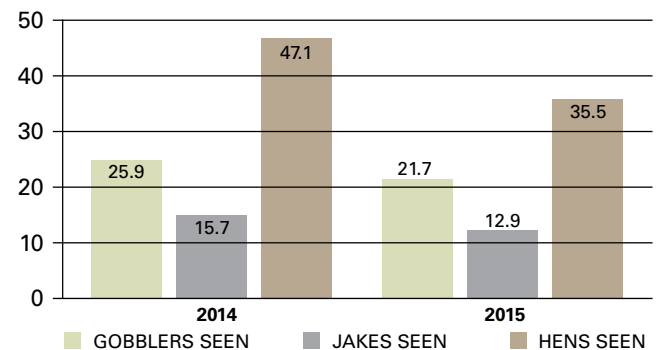
Cooperators in District 4 reported hearing 18,725 gobblers from 1,775 gobblers. On average, hunters heard 54 gobbles from 22 gobblers for each 10 hours hunted.

Gobblers seen per 100 hours hunted were 21.7. Jakes seen were 12.9 and hens observed per 100 hours were 35.

Gobblers and Gobbles Heard per 10 Hours Hunted



Turkey Observations per 100 Hours Hunted



Reproduction

During the 2015 brood survey cooperators in District 4 observed 1.71 poults per hen, which was up slightly from 2014. A total of 115 hens were observed; 59 hens (51%) successfully raised at least one poult for an average of 3.34 poults per hen with poults.

POULTS PER HEN: 1.71

HENS WITH POULTS: 51%

POULTS PER HEN WITH POULTS: 3.34

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

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

BARBOUR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

By Adam Pritchett, WMA Wildlife Biologist

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

BLUE SPRING WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

By John Powers, WMA Wildlife Biologist

Blue Spring WMA represents another cooperative partnership with the U.S. Forest Service to provide hunting opportunities for the public. The WMA encompasses 24,783 acres, comprising approximately the eastern one third of the Conecuh National Forest in Covington County. 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 in the coastal plain. Additional aspects of habitat management on the WMA include the removal of understory and mid story components to encourage Red-cockaded Woodpecker and a prescribed burning rotation of 2-5 years, depending on the site. Mature hardwoods primarily reside along streamside management zones and drains. Timber management is conducted 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, typical of the lower coastal plain. Permanent

openings are managed to provide habitat for a variety of wildlife species. For more information about Blue Spring WMA, please call 334-898-7013.

GENEVA STATE FOREST WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

By John Powers, WMA Wildlife Biologist.

Geneva State Forest WMA has been managed as a cooperative partnership with the Alabama Forestry Commission, which represented the initial 7,280 acres of the WMA. Recently, through land acquisitions conducted by WFF using State hunting license dollars and matching federal Pittman-Robertson funds, the acreage of this WMA has increased to 16,634 acres. It is predominantly forested with variably thinned longleaf and slash pine that is prescribed burned on a two to three-year intervals. Some mature hardwoods are present along the streamside management zones and small creek bottoms. Through the timber management practices, a mosaic of suitable habitat types are created for wild turkeys. The terrain is flat to low rolling hills. Permanent openings are managed to provide habitat for a variety of wildlife species. For more information about Geneva State Forest WMA, please call 1-334-898-7013. ✓





DISTRICT 5

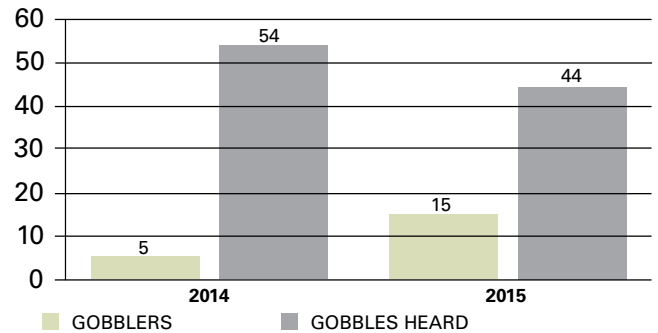
District 5 consists of 11 counties in southwest Alabama. This ecoregion is part of the Coastal Plain, which rises from gentle, rolling hills in the south, to steep, mountain-like ridges to the north. The extreme north end of the district transitions to open prairie. This region is bisected by the lower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

Gobbling Activity and Observations

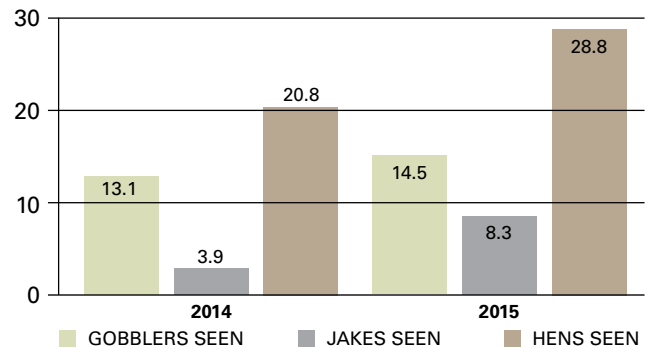
Cooperators in District 5 reported hearing 23,592 gobblers from 1766 gobblers. On average, hunters heard 44 gobblers from 15 gobblers for each 10 hours hunted.

Gobblers seen per 100 hours hunted were 14.5. Jakes seen were 8.3 and hens observed per 100 hours were 28.8.

Gobblers and Gobblers Heard per 10 Hours Hunted



Turkey Observations per 100 Hours Hunted



Reproduction

During the 2015 brood survey cooperators in District 5 observed 1.44 poult per hen, which was down slightly from 2014. A total of 204 hens were observed; 105 hens (51%) successfully raised at least one poult for an average of 2.79 poults per hen with poults.

POULTS PER HEN: 1.44

HENS WITH POUTS: 51%

POULTS PER HEN WITH POUTS: 2.79

District 5 - Wildlife Management Areas that Provide Turkey Hunting

FRANK W. AND ROB M. BOYKIN WMA

Unfortunately, the Frank W. and Rob M. Boykin Wildlife Management Area will no longer be a part of the state WMA system. After graciously allowing the public to utilize the area for approximately 60 years at no cost to the State, the property owners have made the decision not to renew the cooperative agreement.

“The Boykin family and the Tensaw Land & Timber Company continue to be conservation pioneers whose actions benefit Alabama’s wildlife resources and rich hunting heritage,” said N. Gunter Guy, Jr. Conservation Commissioner. “Their willingness to provide public hunting land for inclusion in Alabama’s WMA system has provided an opportunity for thousands of hunters to enjoy the state’s great outdoors. We greatly appreciate their conservation efforts in Alabama.”

W. L. HOLLAND AND MOBILE-TENSAW DELTA WMA

By Thomas E Harms, WMA Wildlife Biologist

W.L. Holland and Mobile-Tensaw Delta WMA are located in the lower portion of the Mobile-Tensaw Delta south of Interstate 65 in Baldwin and Mobile Counties. The area encompasses approximately 51,040 acres of tracts acquired by the Forever Wild Program, WFF and our cooperative partners in conservation, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Ducks Unlimited. The W.L. Holland and Mobile-Tensaw Delta WMA are primarily composed of open marsh in the lower regions with islands of bay, cypress and tupelo gum as latitude increases, which is primarily accessible only by boat. Two compartments are accessible by vehicle. One tract, termed the Jacinto Port tract, is in transition to be restored to a longleaf pine community leaving hammocks of live oaks with scattered pockets of other hardwoods in lower areas. Rotational prescribed burning of this tract will assist turkey populations in providing early successional acreage to enhance nesting and brood rearing habitats. For more information, contact the District V office at 251-626-5474.

PERDIDO RIVER WMA

By Casey Norris, WMA Wildlife Biologist

Perdido River WMA encompasses approximately 17,337 acres east of Robertsdale in Baldwin County. The acreage was acquired through purchases by the Forever Wild Program and State Lands Division to provide hunting and recreational opportunities in southwest Alabama. The WMA is primarily composed of plantation pine timber stands with interspersed streamside management zones along the drainages and the Perdido River. An effort to restore coastal tracts of longleaf, through the conversion of the numerous loblolly plantations is currently in progress on the WMA. Thinning operations of both loblolly and longleaf stands are being conducted and prescribed fire is currently being used to maintain these areas to provide improved nesting and brood rearing habitats on the area. Permanent wildlife openings are also maintained in a mixture of warm and cool season plantings to benefit turkeys. For more information, contact the District V office at 251-626-5474.

SCOTCH WMA

By Bruce W. Todd, WMA Wildlife Biologist

Scotch WMA is comprised of 19,480 acres of commercial forestland located east of Coffeeville in Clarke County. The WMA represents a long-standing cooperative partnership between Scotch Land Management LLC and WFF to provide quality public hunting opportunities in southwest Alabama. The WMA consists primarily of variable aged loblolly pine plantations interspersed by streamside management zones along the drains consisting of a collection of mature hardwood species. Scattered tracts of longleaf pine are present across the WMA where suitable soils are conducive for their propagation. Approximately 27 acres of permanent wildlife openings are established with warm and cool season wildlife plantings that are managed by WFF personnel for the benefit of turkey and deer. For more information about Scotch WMA contact the District V Wildlife Office at 251-626-5474.

UPPER DELTA WMA

By Thomas E. Harms, WMA Wildlife Biologist

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



Steve Gullledge

WILD TURKEY MISPERCEPTIONS IN ALABAMA

Predators are catching turkeys on my land and that is why I do not see many birds.

While it is an established fact that predators negatively impact turkey populations by destroying nests and taking poults and occasional adult turkeys, some scientific studies have indicated this effect is greater in areas of poor habitat. Most predation events occur on nests, eggs, and small poults and while hens are nesting (laying or incubating). Clutches of eggs are vulnerable to nest predators like raccoons, opossums, snakes, crows, and wild pigs. It is extremely important for landowners to manage for nesting and brood-rearing habitat in the spring and summer. Lack of quality habitat leads to reduced wild turkey reproduction. An open forest canopy coupled with prescribed fire is the best remedy to enhance nesting and brood-rearing habitat. This strategy will promote lush, herbaceous plants at the ground layer providing food and cover for hens and poults. Proper habitat management to improve nesting and brood habitat is much more important than focusing on predator removal as it is not the silver bullet. Trapping can be incorporated into a comprehensive wild turkey management plan where habitat enhancement is the focus.

If I have a lot of deer on my property, I should have a lot of turkeys, too.

Good deer woods are not always good turkey woods. Generally speaking, deer can utilize and often prefer heavier cover and thickets. Much of Alabama's woodlands are too thick for optimum wild turkey habitat. The best turkey landscapes are those actively managed with fire and timber harvests, and encourage soft and hard mast producing trees and shrubs. Open canopies and understories managed with fire provide the best spring and summer habitats while mast producing trees improve fall and winter nutrition. If you manage for turkey woods, you will likely improve your deer habitat as well. To emphasize this point in real world conditions, think about the following scenario: You are a turkey hunter and hunt your own property. You have a few grass patches but most of the woods in your slice of heaven are too thick to shake a stick. Not much of the ground has seen the light of day or a match in years. However, your neighbor applies prescribed fire regularly, retains and protects native, mast-producing trees, cuts a few saw log pines from time to time, maintains wide linear openings in native grasses and forbs and plants beneficial millets and clovers to supplement the natural habitat. The take-home message is on most spring mornings the gobbling you will hear will be across the property line. Wildlife biologists with the Alabama Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division, Alabama

Wildlife Federation, and the National Wild Turkey Federation are available to assist landowners prepare habitat management plans for wild turkeys and other wildlife.

I am not hearing many turkeys gobbling so there must not be many gobblers where I hunt.

There are many factors that affect gobbling such as weather, hunting pressure, and time of year. Failure to hear gobbling on any particular morning or just a few outings is not indicative of the population size. Early season hunts when gobblers are with hens may result in less gobbling. It is not uncommon for gobblers within eyeball range of hens to just strut and drum. There may be a few gobbles from the roost at daylight to attract hens and not many, if any, once the gobbler pitches down. He may strut and drum on the limb and not gobble at all. It is also possible that two springs ago there may not have been a good hatch which resulted in fewer 2-year-old turkeys and therefore less gobbling. Hard hunted turkeys tend to be gobble shy as well and oftentimes live to be old, long-spurred gobblers by eluding hunters. Temperature, rain, wind, fog, barometric pressure and other environmental factors play a huge role in gobbling activity. The best audible index for hunters to measure gobbler numbers is by maintaining a log of gobbling activity over multiple seasons to observe trends. This opportunity is available now statewide by enrolling in the Alabama Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division newly created Avid Turkey Hunter Survey. Participants record gobbling activity, turkeys seen, and harvest information. The results of this information coupled with brood survey data is published this annual wild turkey report, *Full Fans & Sharp Spurs*. The inaugural issue debuted in 2015, which includes the survey observations gathered in the spring and summer of 2014. For more information and to obtain a copy of the publication visit this link: <http://www.outdooralabama.com/wild-turkey>.

I plant a lot of chufa and clover so my turkey population should be good.

Not necessarily. Turkeys do not live by food plots alone. Although it may be helpful to plant wildlife openings with crops that are attractive to turkeys especially in brood rearing season, food plots are not enough. The key is how the entire landscape is managed. The best turkey woods are those actively managed by fire and wildlife-specific timber management. Open forest canopies without thick mid-story and understory structures with lush, fire-induced native grasses and forbs are far more productive in enhancing turkey numbers than food plots. These park-like woodlands often associated with longleaf management

provide more acres in good turkey woods as compared to food plots surrounded by thick forests. Managed woodlands offer more and enhanced features than the typical food plot with more acres in food, cover, nest sites, and brood habitat. For turkeys, daylighted roads (linear openings) from 30- to 60-feet wide in native grasses, forbs, and/or planted in warm season millet mixes or cool season clover mixes are good areas to manage for hens with broods. A network of daylighted roads throughout a tract of land is a better management strategy for turkeys than food plots. Roads tend to meander like a snake throughout a tract of land and enhancing them is a better strategy than just planting a food plot. They have the potential to cover more habitats and serve as travel corridors for broods if managed properly.

I see more hens in the summer without any poults, so their nests must have been busted up.

Maybe so, maybe not. The first part of the statement is true in that the number of hens without any poults has been increasing. Reproduction is typically measured by the number of poults per hen. So, as the number of hens observed without any poults increases, productivity decreases. This observation has been evident in standardized game camera surveys led by Auburn University and the statewide observational brood survey conducted since 2010. It is well-documented that turkey nests are often depredated by predators and hens may also be killed on the nest. Surviving hens may re-nest. But other things may be going on. There is a hypothesis that density dependence may play a role and hens may not nest if quality nest sites are not available. Another theory is that some hens may not get bred due to gobblers being harvested prior to any nesting activity in states with early spring seasons. Additional research is needed to determine the reasons of the increased number of hens without broods.

Feeding wild turkeys is a good thing to do.

Feeding wild turkeys is not advised. In certain damp conditions, a variety of grains can sometimes produce aflatoxins, which researchers have linked with reduced immune functions in poults. In addition, turkeys with diseases that are highly contagious may expose other birds to diseases directly or in contaminated soil at feed sites. Furthermore, feeding turkeys likely benefits predators known to destroy nests. Money spent on habitat improvements and development will far exceed the benefits of any feeding program initiated.

Nothing is being done to address turkey populations and season/bag limit concerns in Alabama.

Recent reported declines in wild turkey reproduction and populations across the Southeast have got the attention of wildlife biologists in Alabama. Working closely with Auburn University, the Alabama Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation, and the Alabama Wildlife Federation, staff with the Division of

Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries are actively investigating these concerns. A wild turkey committee made up of state agency biologists in each region of Alabama, along with NWTF and AWF resource professionals, are following an adaptive management approach to the problem. Guided by Dr. Barry Grand's team at AU School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, the turkey committee is developing a decision tool to address current seasons and bag limits. We are using a prediction model to determine future wild turkey population levels based on various season and bag limit scenarios. Public stakeholder meetings have been conducted in each region to gather input of turkey hunter values on gobbler populations, harvests, and associated tradeoffs. Some of the key elements plugged into this model are estimates of survival, reproduction, and harvest rates. These estimates are based on expert opinion of committee members, as well as research studies. In order to add precision in these estimates and improve the decision-making tool, a wild turkey research project was launched in 2015. Wild turkeys are being trapped and radio-tagged at three locations in the state in this long-term project. A news release from earlier this year about the project is located at: <http://www.outdooralabama.com/conservation-department-partners-comprehensive-turkey-research>. We hope to improve our understanding of survival, reproduction, and harvest rates in order to make recommendations based on sound science not knee-jerk reactions. We are promoting public participation in our investigations through the avid turkey hunter and brood surveys. Also, the Southeast Wild Turkey Working Group consisting of state agency turkey biologists is working with Dr. Mike Chamberlain at the University of Georgia in his investigations of the southeastern turkey decline phenomenon.

I am just one hunter and can't make a difference or have a voice in wild turkey management.

The likelihood of success of a team effort is only as probable as the determination and passion of each individual on the team. You can be part of Alabama's turkey management team. We value your input and participation in our programs such as the avid turkey hunter and brood surveys, public stakeholder meetings, as well as your emails and phone calls. You are also encouraged to report your turkey harvests through Game Check and do not hesitate to call Game Watch to report poachers. The rich history of the comeback of the wild turkey and hunting opportunities we enjoy today deserves that each hunter do their part to ensure the future of the wild turkey resource. To enroll in the avid turkey hunter survey team, contact Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries wild turkey project leaders Steve Barnett (steve.barnett@dcnr.alabama.gov) or Joel Glover (joel.glover@dcnr.alabama.gov).

2015

WILD TURKEY OBSERVATIONAL DATA SUMMARY

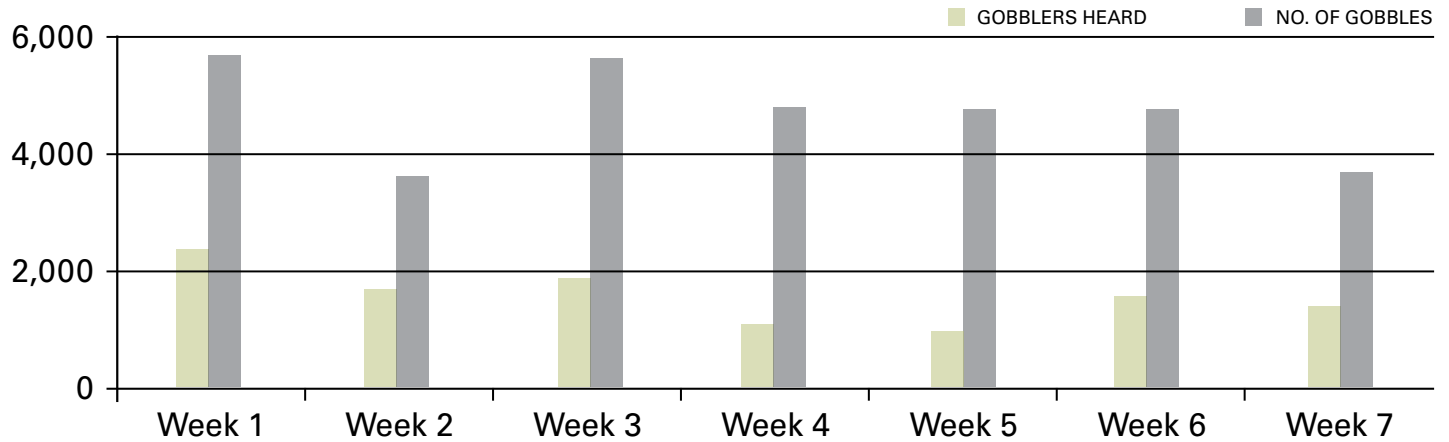
Observational surveys were conducted during the months of July and August.

	OBSERVATIONS	TURKEYS OBSERVED					POULTS PER HEN	POULTS PER HEN WITH POULTS	PERCENT OF HENS WITH POULTS	GOBBLER TO HEN RATIO
		GOBBLERS	HENS - Without Poults	HENS - With Poults	POULTS	Unknown				
STATEWIDE	875	773	520	683	2,098	123	1.74	3.07	56.8%	1: 1.56
DISTRICT 1 TOTALS	216	236	137	175	499	13	1.60	2.85	56.1%	1: 1.32
DISTRICT 2 TOTALS	299	249	144	249	722	29	1.84	2.90	63.4%	1: 1.58
DISTRICT 3 TOTALS	113	99	84	95	387	48	2.16	4.07	53.1%	1: 1.81
DISTRICT 4 TOTALS	84	83	56	59	197	4	1.71	3.34	51.3%	1: 1.39
DISTRICT 5 TOTALS	163	106	99	105	293	29	1.44	2.79	51.5%	1: 1.92
Piedmont	222	161	108	176	477	18	1.68	2.71	62.0%	1: 1.76
Southeastern Plains	493	455	330	365	1,130	82	1.63	3.10	52.5%	1: 1.53
Ridge & Valley	37	61	17	13	54	5	1.80	4.15	43.3%	1: 0.49
Southwestern Appalachians	112	91	53	118	409	18	2.39	3.47	69.0%	1: 1.88
Interior Plateau	11	5	12	11	28	0	1.22	2.55	47.8%	1: 4.60
Hunting Club	55	37	18	42	128	12	2.13	3.05	70.0%	1: 1.62
Private	464	438	269	345	1,132	64	1.84	3.28	56.2%	1: 1.40
WMA	330	292	210	280	786	44	1.60	2.81	57.14%	1:1.68
Public	26	6	6	16	52	3	1.33	3.25	41.03%	1: 6.5

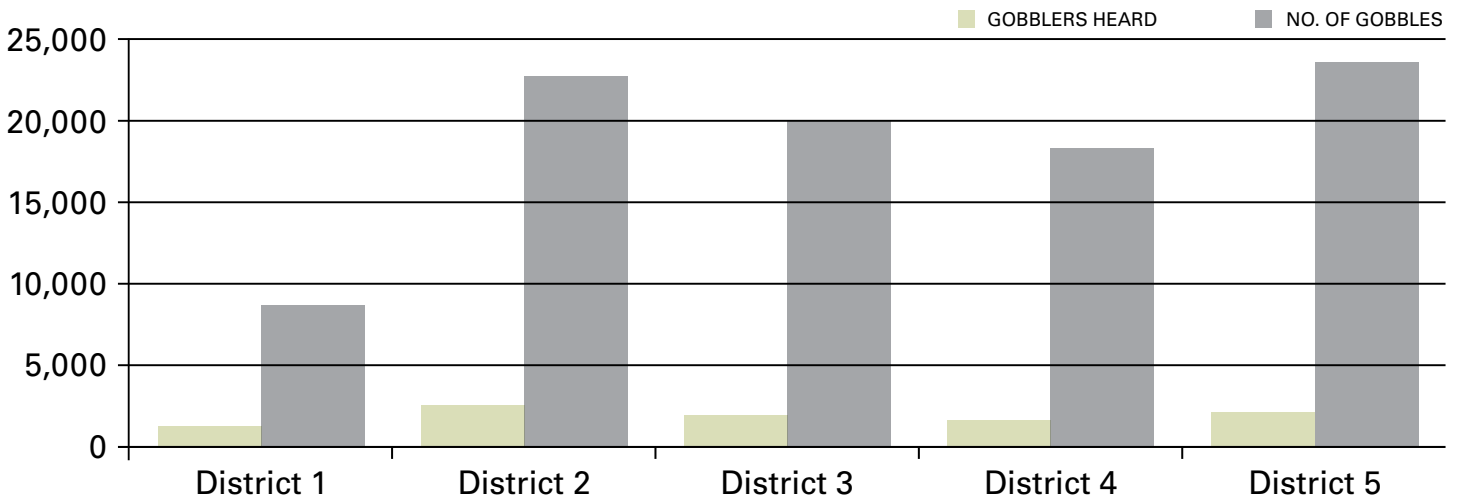
STATEWIDE GOBBLING ACTIVITY AND OBSERVATIONS

Cooperators statewide reported hearing 93,784 gobblers from 8,532 gobblers. On average, hunters heard 45 gobbles from 16 gobblers for each 10 hours hunted. Gobblers seen per 100 hours hunted were 13.2. Jakes seen were 8.9 and hens observed per 100 hours were 30.9.

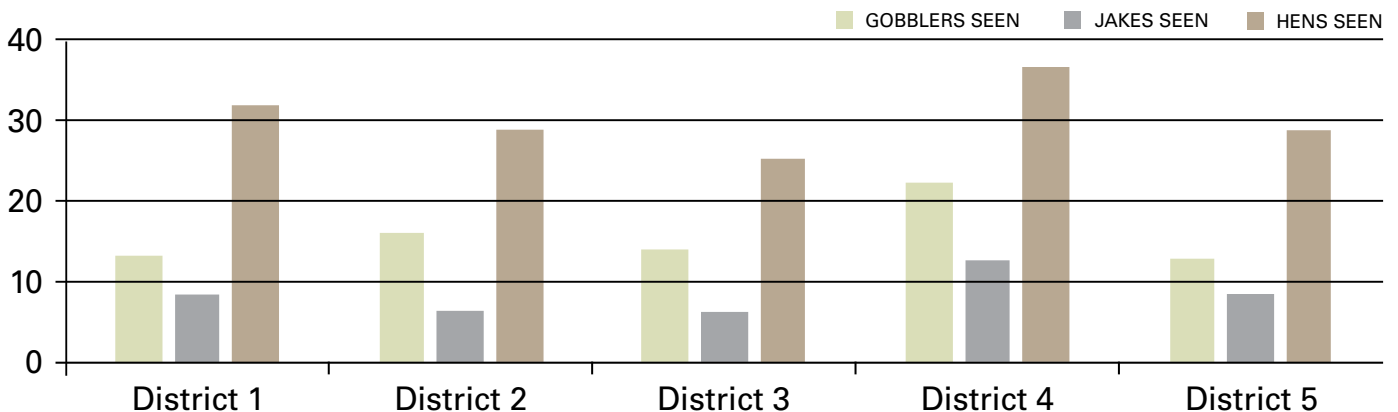
Gobblers Heard and Number of Gobblers During the Seven Week Season



Gobblers Heard and Gobblers For Each District



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



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.

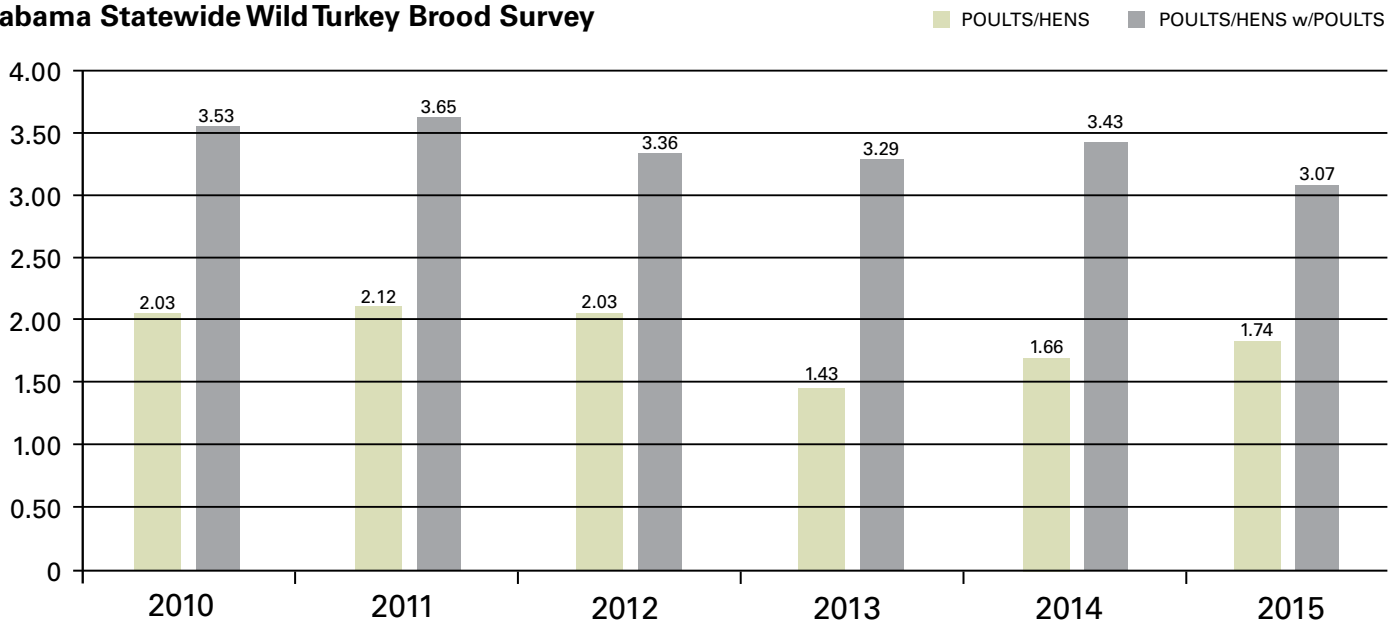
Wildlife biologists typically rate brood survival based on the average number of poults per hen. Recruitment of four or more poults per hen is considered excellent, three is good, two is fair, and one or less poult per hen is poor. While survival of one poult



Steve Gullledge

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. ♀

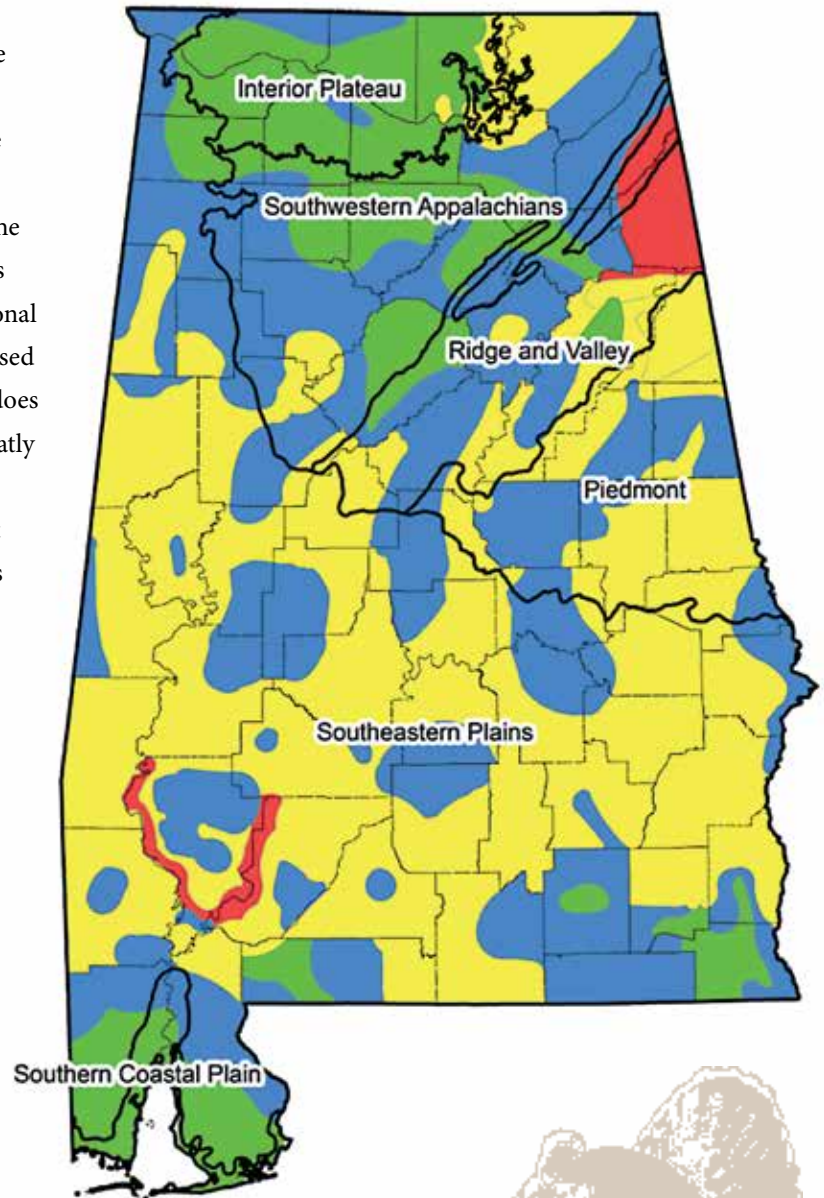
Alabama Statewide Wild Turkey Brood Survey





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

Participation in this process allows hunters a unique opportunity to contribute directly to the conservation and management of turkey in Alabama. Participants will receive

a copy of "*Full Fans & Sharp Spurs*," the Alabama turkey program annual report that discusses turkey population trends, biology and management in each area of the state.

How Can I Participate?

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

If you would like to become involved, please contact one of the ADCNR Turkey Program Biologists listed below or go to www.outdooralabama.com/wild-turkey. Your efforts will assist the ADCNR 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 or

Joel Glover, Alabama Asst. Turkey Project Leader
joel.glover@dcnr.alabama.gov

ALABAMA STATE CHAPTER



SHOTGUN WINNER



Kenny Johnson



© Szeno | Dreamstime.com

Phil Savage, left, of the Alabama Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation, presents Bubba Ott from Webb, Ala., with a brand new Stoeger P-350 shotgun for his participation in the Avid Turkey Hunter Survey conducted by ADCNR's Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division (WFF).

Ott's name was randomly chosen from survey participants in 2015. The Avid Turkey Hunter Survey provides WFF biologists with valuable information on statewide and regional trends in gobbling activity, hunter effort, harvest rates, age structure and sex ratios. This knowledge ultimately helps WFF make management decisions that link the interests of sportsmen with the wise use of the state's turkey resource. Thank you to all the hunters who participated in the survey.



NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION

Craig Scruggs, Alabama State NWTF Chapter President



To a turkey hunter, there's nothing sweeter than sitting in the woods in the pre-dawn hours of spring, watching the first rays of sunshine through the gray mist, and hearing a turkey gobbling in the distance. Alabama is blessed to be recognized as a great destination for turkey hunting, but we cannot take for granted the abundance of wildlife in this state. The Alabama Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) is proud of the partnership we share with the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) in helping to promote wildlife habitat and preservation of the wild turkey.

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 organization. We hope that if you are not a member of the

Federation that you will consider joining us and be a part of preserving our hunting heritage. Alabama has approximately 70 Chapters around the state, and each of these Chapters will soon be hosting their annual banquets. Visit the NWTF website at www.nwtf.org to find a banquet near you.

Much of this publication is the result of hard work by staff of the DCNR and the turkey hunters who participated in the 2015 spring gobble hunting survey. Also, thanks to NWTF Regional Biologist Brandon Bobo for his assistance. Thank you to everyone who helped make this publication a reality.

Finally, the Alabama Chapter of the 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. ♡

Brandon Bobo, NWTF Regional Biologist



It has been another full year of unprecedented accomplishments for the Alabama State Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF). There are many individuals, organizations and agencies that deserve thanks for these accomplishments. First, we at NWTF must always recognize the unwavering devotion and commitment shown by our volunteers; because without them we would not have the impact we do in hunting heritage outreach and education, as well as on-the-ground conservation work. Also, we must thank all of our partnering organizations and agencies such as the Alabama Department of Conservation

and Natural Resources, United States Forest Service, Natural Resources Conservation Services, United State Fish and Wildlife Services, Alabama Forestry Commission, The Longleaf Alliance, The Nature Conservancy, Alabama Wildlife Federation, and Alabama Cooperative Extension System, as well as many others. I would also like to thank all of our Alabama State Chapter Board of Directors and Executive Committee members, as well as the NWTF field staff here in Alabama. I also thank my wife Ashley and my daughter Karlie for their continued support!

I am personally grateful to be back in my native “Sweet Home Alabama,” and even more thankful that I am able to focus my efforts solely on the service of this great state. I have served in a capacity which covered both Ala. and Miss. over the past year; however, recent structural changes have afforded our staff the ability to devote me specifically to Alabama.

This past spring season was not one of Alabama’s best, but there is promise for the future of the turkey population here in the Heart of Dixie. Alabama’s newly formed Turkey Management Committee, whose members are identified in this publication,

is embarking on the largest statewide turkey research project in this state’s history with the assistance of Auburn University’s School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences. The State NWTF Chapter has been a key sponsor of a large portion of this project, and the NWTF is looking into the potential of utilizing recent land acquisitions as research study areas. This is groundbreaking for our state, and this will serve to give us a great deal of information as it pertains to season and/or bag limit adjustments or any indicated changes to turkey management that are deemed necessary. ♡



Alabama’s NWTF Officer of the Year

This year’s National Wild Turkey Federation Officer of the Year from Alabama is Conservation Enforcement Officer (CEO) Jason McHenry. Jason is assigned to Autauga County in central Alabama. During the 2015 spring turkey season, Jason made numerous arrests for hunting over bait, hunting turkey with an electronic call, hunting turkey with illegal arms (a rifle) and hunting without possessing a harvest record. In addition to enforcing the laws and regulations that protect the resource and level the playing field for all hunters, Officer McHenry also assisted with numerous events involving Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, Lions Club, Archery in the Schools and the One-Shot Governor’s Turkey Hunt.



Conservation Enforcement Officer Jason McHenry.

Jason comes from a long line of law enforcement officers. His dad and brother are both retired from the Department of Public Safety. Jason attended the Alabama State Trooper Academy and began work as a state trooper. As a member of the United States Marine Corp Reserve, he was called up for active duty and deployed to Iraq where he excelled, receiving a medal of valor and other accolades. Jason returned to law enforcement, but left it in 2007 to pursue full-time ministry. He returned to the Department of Public Safety in 2012

and transferred to the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources as a Conservation Enforcement Officer in 2014.

In nominating Jason, Lt. Clifton Robinson stated that Jason pursued turkey hunting violators with a great zeal and enthusiasm. Officer McHenry effectively utilizes his time and resources to protect our wild turkey population. We are proud to have Jason represent Alabama at the National NWTF Convention and wish him the best in the national competition. ♡

LICENSE TO CONSERVE.



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

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

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

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

www.nwtf.org/alabama

SAVE THE
HABITAT.
SAVE THE
HUNT.



NWTF HUNTING HERITAGE SUPER FUND 2015

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

Once we generate these funds to disperse for the aforementioned usages, NWTF then utilizes our partnerships both nationally and within the state to leverage dollars toward these projects. In the 2015 fiscal year, NWTF was able to utilize our Super Fund account as seed money to garner more matching funds that equated to almost a 7:1 matching ratio. This means that in the past year for every dollar raised, we have been able to add close to an additional seven dollars. These matching funds are found in several different ways. One of those avenues comes through Pittman-Robertson dollars that are created from licenses, ammunition and hunting supplies, which allow us to garner a 3:1 match for Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries projects. We are also able to leverage funds through partnerships with the U.S. Forest Service through Stewardship Contracts that allow us to obtain match dollars at a rate of 4:1. NWTF also utilizes partnerships with other organizations and agencies to earn



NWTF State Chapter Executive Committee members present a check for \$64,750 to ALDCNR Division Director Chuck Sykes, center. The money is for the purchase of new public access lands in Alabama.

Billy Pope

grant awarded dollars that further increase our leverage of funds.

The NWTF also utilizes funds generated both through Super Fund and NWTF license plate sales to deposit money into an acquisition fund, and this year has been monumental in terms of public land acquisition. The NWTF has been able to provide acquisition funds to cover the expense of due diligence items of acquisition such as land value appraisals and timber appraisals. This upcoming year is likely to see an addition of nearly 8,000 acres of newly acquired, publicly accessible property across the state.

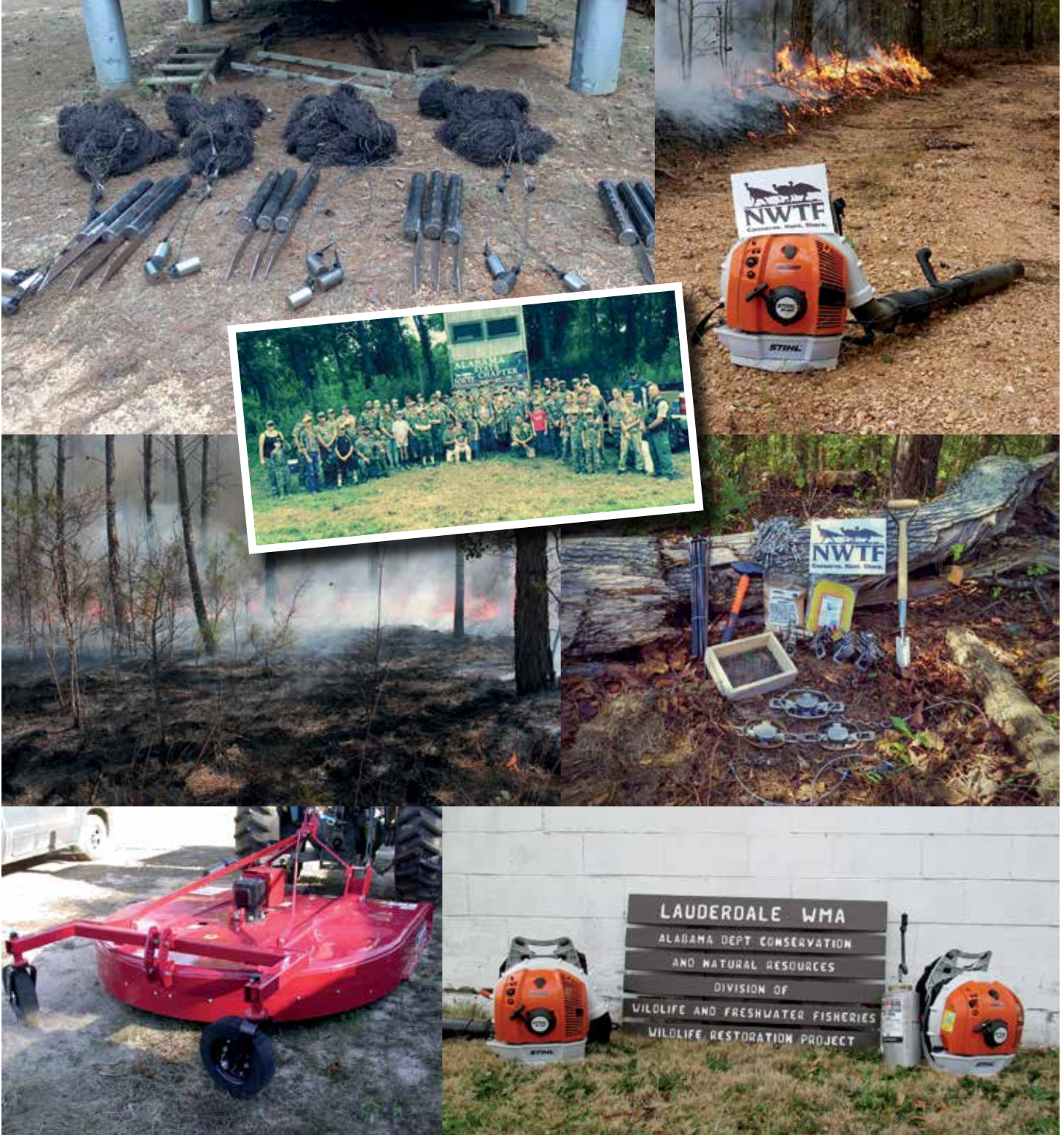
Please take notice of the 2015 Alabama State Super Fund Expenditures document on the following page for more details about how these funds were allocated this past fiscal year. These accomplishments should motivate any avid turkey hunter, volunteer or outdoor enthusiast to get involved and on board with NWTF in its initiative to Save the Habitat. Save the Hunt. ♡

2015 ALABAMA STATE SUPER FUND EXPENDITURES

SCHOLARSHIPS	21 Local Chapter Scholarships	\$5,250.00
	1 State Scholarship	\$1,250.00
EDUCATION	Alabama's Archery in the Schools Program	\$3,841.00
	National Archery in the Schools Program, Alabama state tournament	\$5,000.00
	Alabama Prescribed Fire Council Meeting Sponsorship	\$1,680.00
	Tuscaloosa Chapter Outdoor Education materials	\$8,291.00
	NWTF Education Boxes	\$2,604.00
	Full Fans and Sharp Spurs printing	\$6,812.50
	HUNTING HERITAGE	Hunting Heritage Foundation
	United States Shooting Sports	\$2,500.00
	National Assembly of Sportsmen	\$2,000.00
OUTREACH EVENTS	Eastern Shore Strutters Wheelin' Sportsmen Hunt	\$250.00
	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	\$250.00
	Clay County Area Chapter JAKE's Event	\$250.00
	Sipsey Strutters Chapter JAKE's Event	\$500.00
	West Mobile Golden Spurs Chapter JAKE's Event	\$250.00
	Mobile Chapter Wheelin' Sportsmen Hunt	\$250.00
	Calhoun County Chapter JAKE's Event	\$250.00
	Tennessee Valley Toms Chapter JAKE's Event	\$250.00
	Tuscaloosa County Chapter JAKE's Event	\$250.00
	Buttahatchee Beards and Spurs Chapter JAKE's Event	\$250.00
	North Pickens County Chapter JAKE's Event	\$250.00
	North Pickens County Wheelin' Sportsmen Hunt	\$250.00
	2015 NWTF Convention, AL State Chapter attendance	\$7,568.03
	Becoming an Outdoors Woman Event	\$5,000.00
	ALABAMA SUPER FUND PROJECTS - WMAS, SEED SUBSIDY, REWARDS, & RESEARCH	Public Land Purchase appraisals
Habitat Equipment for Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries (12 pieces matched 3:1)		\$15,915.18
Habitat Equipment for State Lands Forever Wild Property (1 piece)		\$3,170.00
Public Land tree plantings for wildlife (1 total matched 3:1)		\$7,685.00
Public Land Prescribed Burns (2 total)		\$7,500.00
Solon-Dixon Center habitat enhancement equipment		\$1,500.00
Private Land Program trapping materials		\$1,487.80
Pelham Range Seed and Blinds for Wheelin' Sportsmen Hunt		\$4,707.70
2015 Seed Subsidy Program		\$37,657.95
Total		\$213,395.16



NWTF EXPENDITURES





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 nine 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.

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

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

Alabama was the second state to implement the curriculum into

the public school system. The program is now entering its 12th year and continues to grow. Approximately 375 schools have purchased equipment and are conducting the program as part of the physical education curriculum. A conservative estimate of 150 children per school, at 375 schools, means approximately

50,000 Alabama students are being exposed to an archery program each year. New schools enroll in the program continuously and we receive daily requests for information regarding the program from teachers, parents and schools.

This program culminates each school year with a state championship. The participation and enthusiasm at the state championship is exhilarating with more than 1,250 students participating in the 2015 state championship. Due to the popularity of the program and limited space at the state tournament, regional events are held to qualify for state. Last year, seven regional events were held where almost 3,300 students competed.

Twenty Alabama schools from the state tournament advanced to the national event in Kentucky. Miles Austin, a senior from Alma Bryant High School in Mobile County won the male individual National Championship!

Next year's event will be April 7, 2016. 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. ✎



Billy Pope

Miles Austin, a senior from Alma Bryant High School in Mobile County, won the 2015 Male Individual National Championship! Way to go, Miles!

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. ✎





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

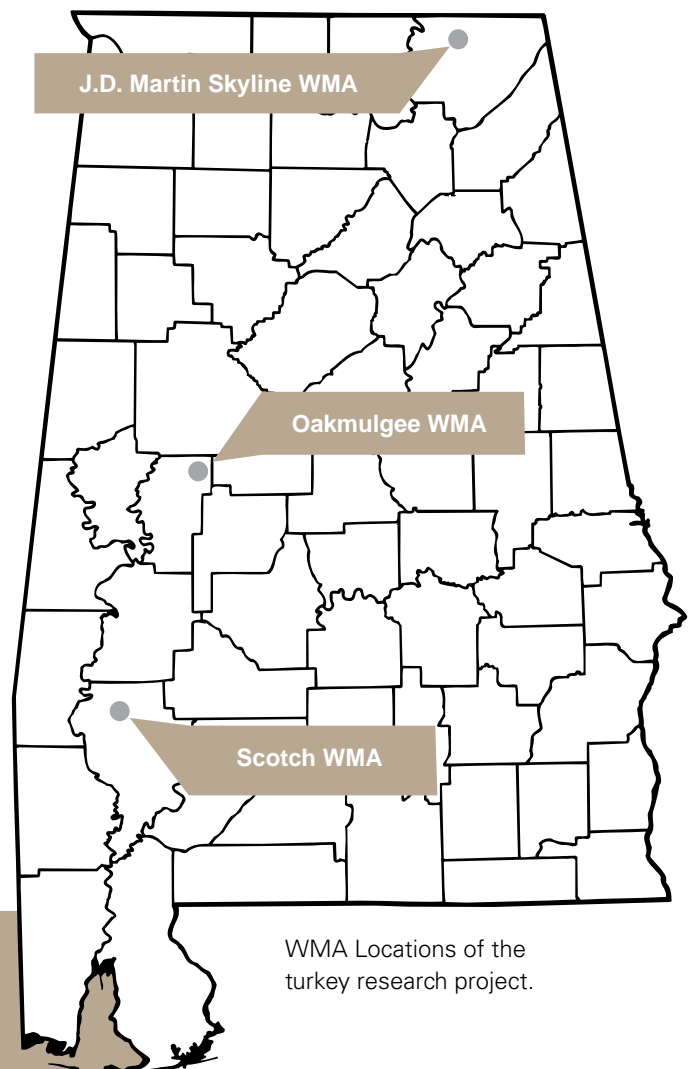
*James B. Grand, Unit Leader, U.S. Geological Survey,
Alabama Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, Auburn University, Alabama*

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

In the previous issue of *Full Fans and Sharp Spurs*, we reported on plans for a large, comprehensive research project investigating the survival and productivity of Alabama turkey populations in three areas of the state. If you read the previous article, you may recall that the three areas were: J.D. Martin Skyline, Oakmulgee, and Scotch Wildlife Management Areas (WMA). We chose those areas because they represent a diversity of habitats and it's possible that turkey populations behave quite differently in each area. I am happy to report that the project is well underway and making good progress. We've been able to successfully conduct surveys and capture and mark turkeys with radio transmitters on all three areas.

We started field studies in late January with a survey using game cameras at random locations. The intent of the survey was two-fold. We wanted to estimate the number of gobblers and jakes on each study area and we wanted to observe how turkeys were distributed across the areas so we could trap and mark them. Our first camera survey did not provide the results we were hoping for and we did not photograph a single turkey. To be fair, the gun season for deer was underway and there was a great deal of disturbance throughout each study area. Additionally, it was necessary to cut the survey period short to avoid planned hunts on each management area. To say the least, it was discouraging, but that did not stop us.

Due to concerns expressed by private landowners regarding issues not connected to the wild turkey study at the Scotch WMA, researchers abandoned that study site in July 2015 and established a new study site at the Barbour WMA in September 2015.

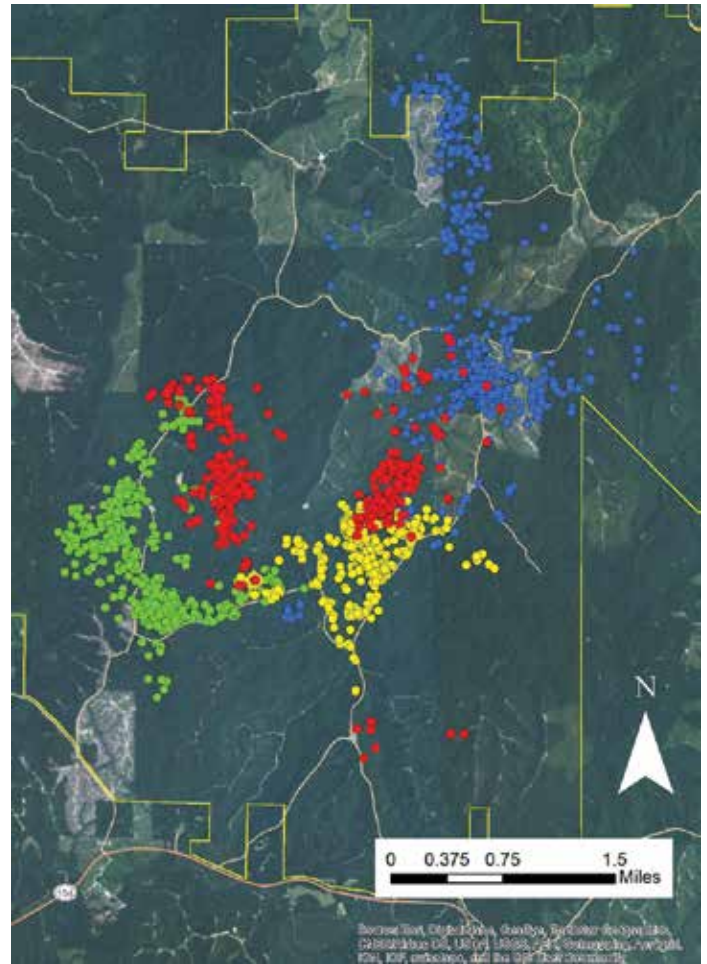


Once deer season was over, we redeployed the cameras and were soon seeing turkeys in numerous locations on every study area, so we began attempting to trap them. We tried several trapping techniques, including a few different styles of walk-in traps and cannon nets. The walk-in traps are small corrals of garden fencing with a roof made of netting to prevent the birds from escaping or getting injured. We were betting on the walk-in traps because we could manage a large number of them, and, historically, they were used to capture wild and free-ranging turkeys throughout their range with great success. However, we were only able to entice modern, Alabama turkeys into the traps at Skyline.

Cannon nets have proven to be our best capture method. These nets are large, approximately 60 feet wide and 40 feet long. Three two-pound projectiles are attached to the leading edge of each net. The projectiles are launched from small cannons buried in the ground behind the net using a small black-powder charge ignited by an electric match, the same type used on large fireworks displays. The net is propelled by the charges over a flock of turkeys, our team rushes in to untangle the birds, take measurements on them, and mark them by attaching a metal leg band and a small back-pack style radio-transmitter.

We use two types of radio transmitters on the turkeys we catch. The first type is the conventional transmitter used in wildlife studies around the world. These transmitters emit a series of radio wave pulses at regular intervals which can only be heard and decoded with a specialized receiver. They are designed to operate year-round for three to four years. If the transmitter remains stationary for more than eight hours, the pulse pattern changes to indicate a bird is likely dead. The second type of transmitter also contains a GPS data logger. These transmitters emit the same pattern of pulses during a specified period each day, and they periodically record the location of the transmitter. Using a specialized downlink, we can download the locations to learn more about the movements of hen turkeys during nesting and brood-rearing.

As of September 2015, we marked 10 birds at Scotch WMA, 38 birds at Oakmulgee WMA, and 33 at Skyline WMA. Until recently, only adult hens marked at Scotch were carrying GPS loggers, but during August and September, we began deploying the GPS loggers on hens at the other two study areas. The technicians living near the study areas attempt to find every marked bird every two weeks. This is no small task, considering the combined search area is over 100,000 acres, and a great deal of that is some of the most rugged, mountainous territory in Alabama. Every 4-6 weeks, the technicians download the GPS data from the loggers. This requires them to stalk each logger-equipped hen and remain within 200 yards of the hen, while carrying a conventional receiver and the downlink unit attached to a laptop computer. Once they get near enough, the logger automatically

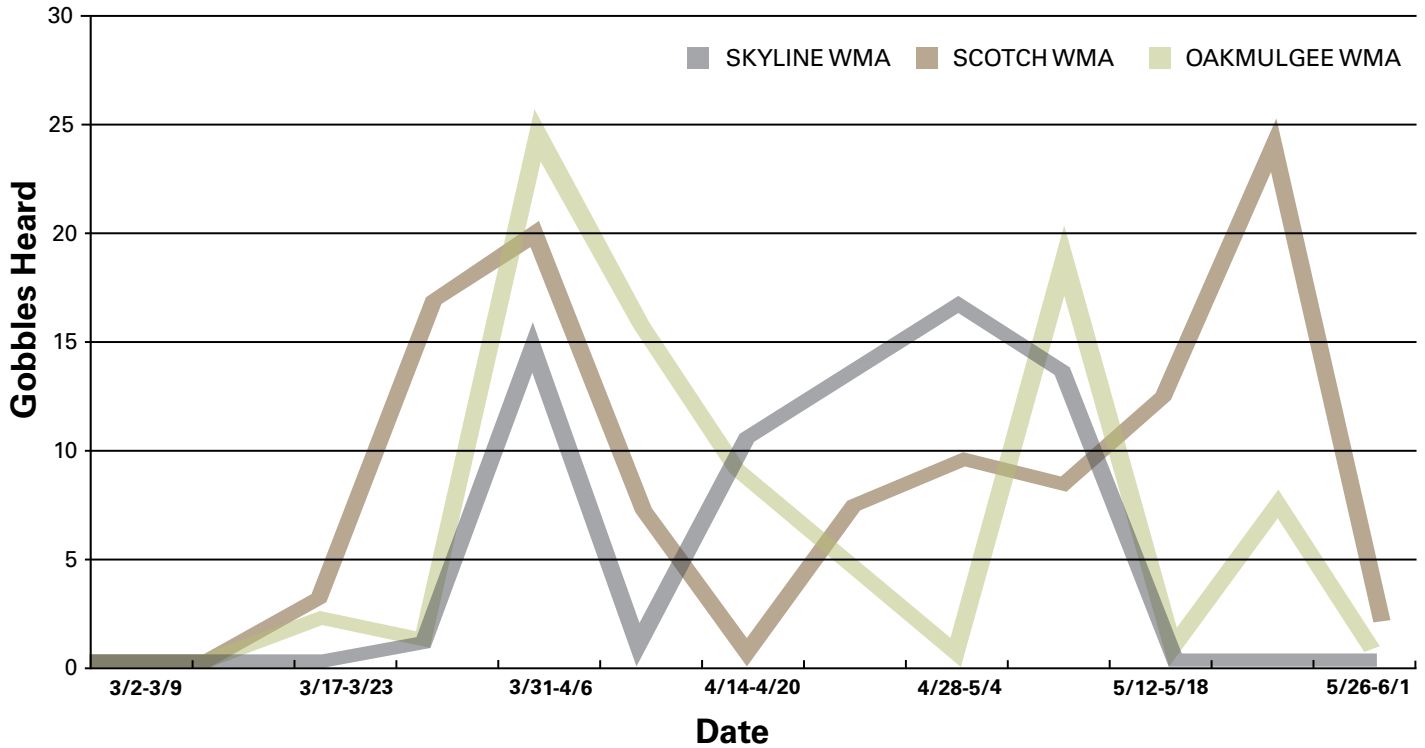


Locations of hens wearing GPS data loggers were mapped and will be used to analyze the habitat preferences of hens and their choice of nest sites.

contacts the downlink and dumps its data to the laptop. This is an extremely challenging task, as the tech is in thick vegetation or steep terrain, and is not able to see how close he or she is to the hen. Maps, like the one shown above, are created from the locations and will be used to analyze the habitat preferences of hens and their choice of nest sites.

We conducted gobbler counts on each study area from March through May and roadside surveys in July and August. As the graph on the next page indicates, the gobbler counts worked well. We detected gobbling at more than 40 percent of the sites surveyed. However, very few turkeys were seen on the roadside surveys in late summer. Eventually, we will amass enough information from these surveys to compare the results to the game camera surveys and determine whether they can be a good index to the size and productivity of turkey populations. If so, then it may be possible to monitor turkey populations over a much larger area in Alabama without the expense of camera surveys.

Gobble Counts from WMA Study Sites



Gobble counts at the three WMA Study Sites were tracked from March through May 2015.

Our hope is to at least triple the number of marked turkeys before next spring. Our best opportunity to accomplish this goal is to capture turkeys as they move about in flocks during fall and winter. You might wonder why we need to mark so many turkeys. Well, the truth is that the natural mortality rate of turkeys is high. We expect well over half of the birds we mark to be harvested or fall victim to predation within a year. Having a large sample of birds marked allows us to accurately estimate rates of survival, harvest, and production. These rates are what determine turkey population dynamics, and the population structure. By understanding the rates governing turkey populations, we will be able to help ADCNR do a better job of predicting how turkey populations will respond to changes in climate, habitat conditions, and harvest.

You might also wonder if you should avoid shooting radio-marked gobblers and jakes. The answer is no. If presented with the opportunity during the hunting season, you should harvest them just as you would any other male turkey. Our goal is to accurately estimate the number of birds taken by hunters so we can make good predictions of how many will be available from one year to the next. We only ask that you notify the area biologist or file the report on our web site www.turkeyres.org, report it on game check, and, of course, return the transmitter, so we can use it again. ♡



NWTF



Steve Gullledge



WEIRD WILD TURKEYS

*By Mark S. Sasser and Steven W. Barnett
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Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries*

A concerned landowner calls the Alabama Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Office and reports a turkey he saw with white feathers. Is it from domestic stock? Should I remove this bird from the flock? Hunters including the authors have experienced strange gobblers in the spring woods. Lonely hen calls lure girlfriend with big gobbler in tow up a deer trail through a gallberry thicket. As the large cotton-top head approaches in full strut with full fan, the hunter sees no beard. Confident that the bird is an adult based on all other mature gobbler characteristics, he takes him. In hand, the gobbler sports long, sharp spurs and a 2-inch beard. What's up with this? It only has a 2-inch beard! Wild turkeys may have weird attributes that make them no less wild.

Wild turkeys, like most wildlife species, may exhibit some very unusual physical features involving plumage, skeleton, spurs, beards, and other parts of the anatomy. Some are caused by genetic mutations and others are caused by rare recessive genes. Some are caused by environmental circumstances. This article will attempt to explain some of these abnormalities and their causes that have been explained by wildlife scientists who have conducted extensive research. Hopefully, it will dispel some of the myths.

FREAK PLUMAGE COLORS

Probably the most common abnormal feature reported by hunters is off-colored wild turkeys. The usual explanation heard is this discoloration must have been caused by a white domestic gobbler escaping from Farmer John's barnyard and breeding wild hens, leaving his mark on succeeding wild turkey populations for generations to come. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The truth is that wild turkeys naturally exhibit the same freak

color patterns as domestic breeds for the same genetic reasons without any help from Farmer John's over-sexed, runaway gobbler. The tendency for freak coloration is inherited, usually as a recessive trait, meaning that a turkey may carry the trait in its genes without necessarily showing it and passing it on to its offspring. It may show up in off-colored plumage if it has inherited the same trait also from its other parent. In this way, the tendency for such freaks is maintained in the turkey population in a given area and recurs time after time for many years. It cannot be eliminated from the population by killing only the specimens that show the trait because they carry only a relatively small fraction of the population's genes for the trait.

Three color aberrations known to occur in wild turkeys are albinism (whiteness), melanism (blackness), and erythrism (redness). These may occur singly or in combination and may be expressed in a few feathers or over much of the turkey's plumage. Plumage color is normally exhibited bilaterally, meaning that if an off-color condition exists in a group of feathers on one side of the specimen, the corresponding feathers on the other side will exhibit the same condition-like a mirror image. When odd-colored feathers are scattered across the body and not exhibited bilaterally, the condition is called a color "mosaic." But mosaic coloration is extremely rare.

The most common off-color plumage of wild turkeys is the "smoke gray" plumage and is really not all that rare. Dr. Lovett Williams, a wild turkey biologist and researcher in Florida, collected over one hundred reports of smoke gray turkeys across 23 states, involving all four subspecies of wild turkeys.

In these specimens, it appears as though the turkey had been dipped in bleach to remove the metallic brown pigments. Some of the plumage retains traces of normal markings and the tail

retains most of its brown and black markings. The primary wing feathers retain their black and white bars, but are faded. The lower back is almost normal in color. The breast, upper back, and neck are dirty-white. In the woods, at a distance, the smoke gray turkey looks white. This smoke gray form is an example of incomplete albinism. Also, the smoke gray plumage appears to be sex-linked, being much more prevalent in females than male turkeys.

Turkeys sometimes exhibit a combination of albinism and eryth-rism (redness). One color combination that has been document-ed is a white primary and secondary wing feathers, nearly white middle tail feathers, and an almost completely red body and wing coverts. Specimens have been examined with a marbled or “brindle” pattern in secondary wing feathers and reddish color-ation on the rest of the plumage in Alabama and Florida.

When odd colors show up in birds, it is usually because a certain darker pigment is missing, permitting the underlying colors to show up more. But in the case of melanism (blackness), black pigments are added to the plumage. Those “black” turkeys reported had faint remnants of normal colors in addition to the black. These turkeys would appear solid black if seen in the woods.

There have been specimens with almost black tail feathers and turkeys with black primary feathers, lacking the white bars that usually are seen on the wings. Sometimes, a few primary wing feathers are solid black without any white bars and sometimes white without any black bars. In the early 90s, one of the authors killed a nice gobbler in Crenshaw County that had perfectly normal wing feathers on one side, but the primary feathers on the other side were solid black without any white bars.

There have been solid white wild turkeys reported in other states, but have not been documented in Alabama. That doesn't mean that one does not exist, because it may very well. As you can now see, many color variations can exist in the wild turkey because they experience mutations that affect their plumage color and were doing so for thousands of years before turkeys were domesticated and before Farmer John's tame gobbler went wild.

OTHER UNUSUAL PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

BEARDS

Approximately 2 to 4 percent of wild turkey hens have beards. Most avid turkey hunters have witnessed hens with beards. This anomaly drives home the point of identifying turkeys based



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It is not all that unusual for turkeys to have multiple beards. The additional beards are usually shorter and thinner than the main beard.

on plumage and probably more importantly, head and neck characteristics especially for gobblers only hunting. In Alabama, gobblers only may be harvested, so obviously bearded hens are illegal. Although rare, adult gobblers may not have a beard. They either never grew one or the beards are pulled off by fighting, predator attacks, or some other event. If a beard is pulled off, a new one with fewer bristles may grow near the old beard scar.

Multiple beards are not uncommon. The National Wild Turkey Federation wild turkey records for Alabama (2012) reveal an atypical gobbler with two beards totaling 22.5 inches in length. The extra beards that are located above and below the normal beard are usually short and thin. True multiple beards are separated by skin where they may emerge from the breast. Some adult gobbler beards or portions of the beard will appear as if cut off, the cause of which is unknown. Another weird condition in



Approximately 2 to 4 percent of wild turkey hens sport a beard like the hen in this photo. Because only gobblers may be harvested in Alabama, it is important to use other identifying features, such as head and neck characteristics, for determining the sex of a bird.

stubby beards is a lack of melanin (black pigment). This deficiency may result in a blonde streak across the beard where a break occurred. Hunters often attribute these short, broken off beards as beard rot or beard fungus (neither of which is true).

SPURS

Adult gobblers without any spurs have been reported. One of the authors harvested an adult gobbler at the Scotch Wildlife Management Area in Clarke County that sported a beard about ten inches in length and no spurs. For a hunter who measures the trophy class by spur length, this can be disconcerting! Some gobblers may have a spur on one leg while the other leg is absent of a spur. Growth rates may vary in spur length of a gobbler resulting in one spur shorter than the other. Some spurs curve up while others are straight. Spur color can be unusual as well. While most spurs are black, the authors have harvested gobblers with spurs that were pink at the base, cream in middle, and black-tipped (a unique feature but desirable from a hunter perspective).

Gobblers with multiple spurs have been taken in Alabama. According to the most recent NWTF wild turkey records two specimens (1999) reported at least two spurs on one or both legs. This report included a Yellow Hammer State gobbler with three

spurs on one leg. Fossil records account for a leg bone with three spurs that was excavated in Florida.

MORE STRANGE FEATURES

Harvested gobblers with long toenails have been rarely documented. In these reports, the toenails apparently continued to grow giving them a corkscrew shape. The leg color of wild turkeys is normally a light shade of red (usually pink). Some birds with normal plumage colors may have cream or white legs. A melanistic turkey has been reported with black legs. A few states including Alabama have documented gobblers with tufts of feathers growing from the top of the head. This abnormality goes against the grain of “not a feather out of place”.

HUNTING ODD TURKEYS

Weird turkeys are wild turkeys and no less fun to pursue. Thankfully, there are no strange attributes in the gobbler or drum of these birds, so the hunt is just as enjoyable as chasing a “normal gobbler.” After all, the true measure of a successful hunt for most turkey hunters is hearing gobbling. And if you happen to harvest a strange looking bird, just chalk it up as a unique trophy and be proud!

Wild Turkey Disease Mortality Form

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

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

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

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

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

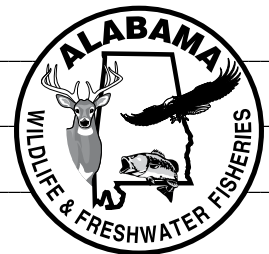
Phone: _____ Email: _____

Date turkey was found: _____ / _____ / _____

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

Description of turkey when found: _____

Additional Comments: _____

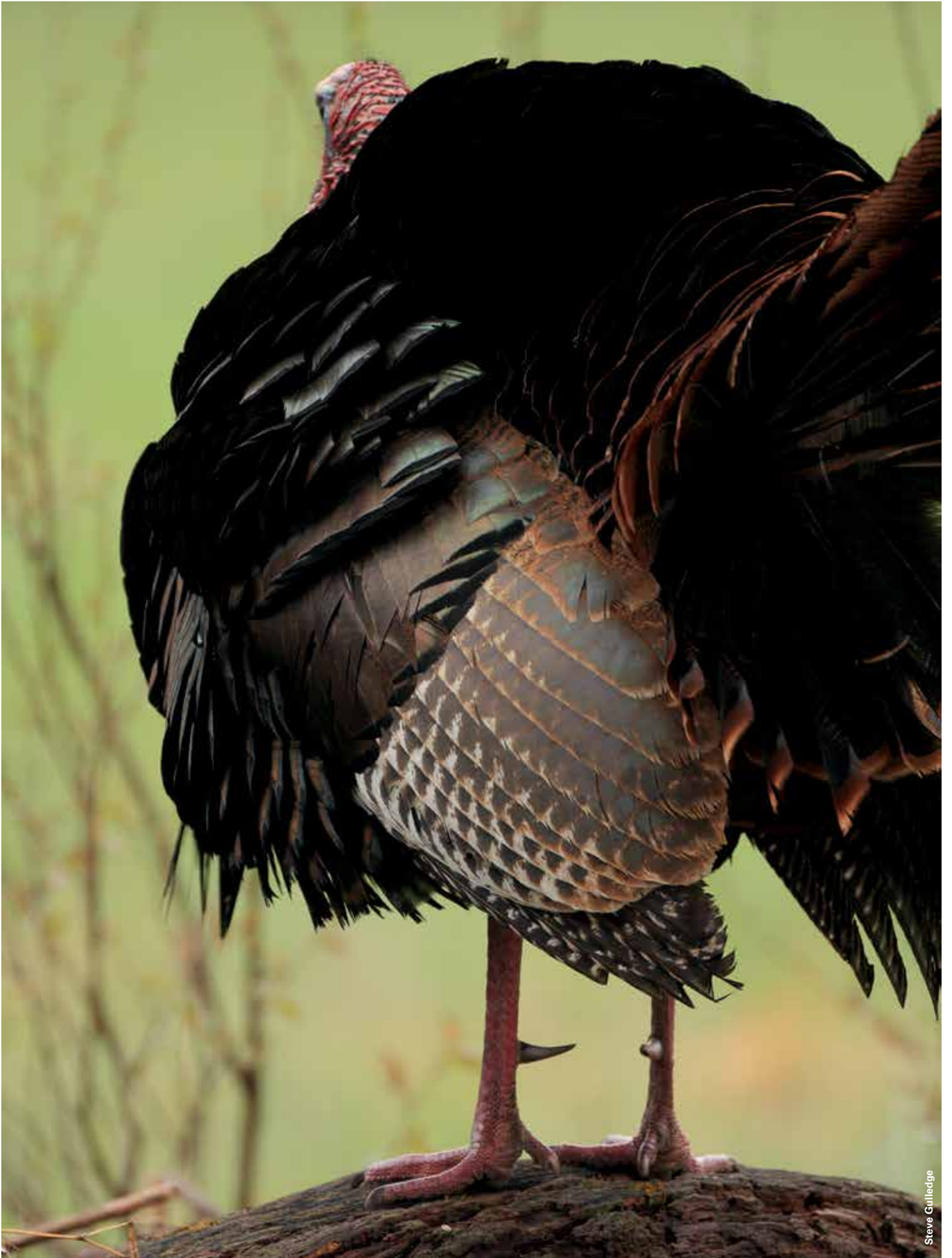


FIRST HARVEST CERTIFICATE

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.



MANAGE FOR THE FUTURE...OUR WILDLIFE IS DEPENDING ON YOU!



Game Check System for 2015-2016 Deer and Turkey Seasons

Accurate data provided by hunters through the Game Check system will allow the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to more effectively manage deer and turkey populations for the future.

1 Before You Go Hunting:

You must obtain a hunting license and a paper Harvest Record.

If you are exempt from needing a license or have a lifetime hunting license, you still need a Harvest Record. You can get a Harvest Record online at www.outdooralabama.com or in the Alabama Hunting and Fishing Digest.

License exempt hunters are hunters under the age of 16, residents age 65 and older, and resident landowners who hunt their own property.

2 During Your Hunt:

You must always carry your Harvest Record, your hunting license and a pen or pencil while hunting.

You must fill out the Harvest Record with the date and type of animal taken **BEFORE** moving the animal. This includes antlered deer and turkeys.

3 After Your Harvest:

Please report your deer or turkey harvest through the Game Check system after your harvest.

If you are exempt from needing a license or have a 64-year-old, optional 65-year-old or Senior lifetime hunting license, you must have a Hunter Exempt License Privilege (HELP) number, which can be obtained anywhere licenses are sold.

There are three ways to report your harvest:

1. On your smartphone through the Outdoor Alabama app
Download the app at <http://www.outdooralabama.com/mobile-apps>
2. Online at www.outdooralabama.com/gamecheck
3. Call 1-800-888-7690

Revised 03/31/15

At the end of the check-in process, you will receive a confirmation number to write on the Harvest Record



Alabama 2015-2016 Harvest Record

■ Harvest Record must be in possession when hunting. ■ Harvest Record must be filled out before moving the animal.

Name: _____ License No. _____

ANTLERED BUCK – One of the three must have 4 pts, 1" or longer on one side

Harvest Date:	Points:	Confirmation No.:
___/___/___	R: ___ L: ___	_____
___/___/___	R: ___ L: ___	_____
___/___/___	R: ___ L: ___	_____

UNANTLERED DEER

Harvest Date:	Confirmation No.:
___/___/___	_____
___/___/___	_____
___/___/___	_____
___/___/___	_____
___/___/___	_____

NOTE: For Barbour County – minimum of 3 points, 1" or longer, on one antler for all antlered bucks. Further restrictions apply on certain management areas. See Wildlife Management Area information.

Use back or attach handwritten version to record additional unantlered deer

TURKEY

Harvest Date: ___/___/___ || ___/___/___ || ___/___/___ || ___/___/___ || ___/___/___
 Confirmation No.: _____ || _____ || _____ || _____ || _____

HOW TO REPORT YOUR HARVEST ~ • SMARTPHONE APP: OUTDOOR ALABAMA • ONLINE: www.outdooralabama.com • PHONE: 1-800-888-7690

