

Spittin' & Drummin'

*2008
Mississippi
Wild Turkey
Report*



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS

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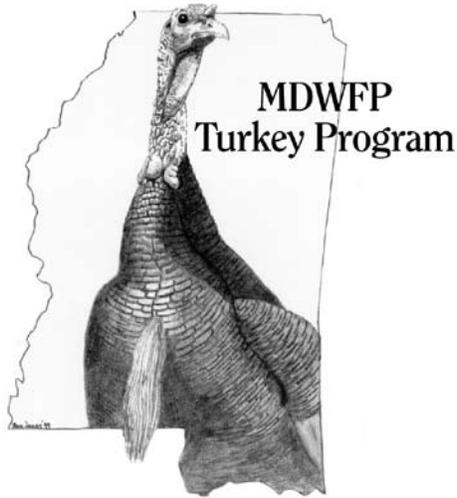
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Spittin' & Drummin'

2008 MISSISSIPPI
WILD TURKEY REPORT



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS
1505 Eastover Drive ■ Jackson, MS 39211

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

WE WISH TO THANK THE MANY MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS employees who have assisted the Wild Turkey Program during this past year – their efforts have made this publication possible. As always, the hard work of Jason Price deserves a very special thanks. Jason has created a data entry and analysis program that has allowed us to manage the data we collect on turkeys and turkey hunting, and he is always willing to help us with data management and analysis. We would also like to thank Dene Smith for all that she does to make the turkey program run smoothly – she continues to be instrumental in nearly every aspect of the turkey program and has been a great help to us. We thank Susan Hardy, Marnia Hazlewood, Jim Willcutt, Ashley Gary, Alan Mumbower, Matt Brock, and Scott Edwards for their help with this report and other turkey program tasks during this past year. Past Turkey Program Coordinators Ron Seiss and James Austin continue to be great resources for us, and are always willing to help with any turkey issue. Cindy Clark helped with the graphic layout and formatting of this report and we appreciate all she does to help us make this publication look great.

The Mississippi Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation deserves special recognition for their special partnership with the MDWFP over the years. The Mississippi Chapter of the NTWF continues to play a vital role in the MDWFP Turkey Program and their support is greatly appreciated. Funds from the Mississippi Chapter Super Fund were used to help produce this publication and to make it available to thousands of Mississippi turkey hunters.

Most importantly, Mississippi's turkey hunters deserve a special thank you for helping collect the data needed to produce this report. Your data collection efforts, comments, input, and concern helps us best manage Mississippi's wild turkey resource! Thanks for all that you do for this great bird!

Dave Godwin, Adam Butler, and Joe Koloski

FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHER

Steve Gullede, of Bruce, Mississippi, is an excellent outdoor photographer with a passion for the wild turkey. Steve has served as President of the Mississippi Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation, and has served on the Board of Directors of the Mississippi Chapter of the NTWF for many years. We greatly appreciate Steve's willingness to share some of his outstanding turkey photography for use in this publication, and we thank him for all he does for the wild turkey!

**FEDERAL AID
IN WILDLIFE
RESTORATION**



**A PITTMAN-
ROBERTSON
FUNDED PROJECT**

This report is produced by the Technical Guidance Project, the Statewide Wildlife Development Project and the Statewide Wildlife Investigations Project and is primarily funded by Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MDWFP Turkey Regions Map.....	ii
Introduction.....	1
Private Lands Habitat Program.....	2
How are Turkeys in My Neck of the Woods?.....	3
Mississippi Wild Turkey Population Statistics.....	4
Statewide.....	6
Turkey Region 1 – North MS.....	8
Turkey Region 2 – Delta.....	10
Turkey Region 3 – East-central MS.....	12
Turkey Region 4 – Southwest MS.....	14
Turkey Region 5 – Southeast MS.....	16
Join Our Spring Gobbler Hunting Survey Team.....	18
Magnolia State Turkey Talk.....	19
National Wild Turkey Federation Membership Application.....	33
Long Beards & Curved Spurs – Mississippi Wild Turkey Records.....	35
Top Scoring Typical.....	36
Top Scoring Non-Typical.....	37
Longest Beard.....	37
Longest Spurs.....	38
Heaviest.....	39
National Records – Eastern Wild Turkey.....	39
Ways I Can Help Conserve Mississippi's Wild Turkey.....	41
Spring Gobbler Hunting Survey Application.....	43
Wild Turkey Disease Mortality Form.....	45
MS Wild Turkey Records Registration Form.....	47
2008 Turkey Report Evaluation.....	49



Photo by Jim Willcutt

2008 Mississippi Wild Turkey Report

“S PITTIN’ & DRUMMIN’” IS AN ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS’ (MDWFP) Wild Turkey Program. The purpose of this report is to provide turkey hunters and others with information concerning Mississippi’s wild turkey resource. The report contains biological and sociological data used by the MDWFP to monitor and manage the state’s turkey population. This report is one of the primary tools used by the MDWFP to educate and inform turkey hunters and landowners and wildlife managers interested in the wild turkey.

We would like to encourage all turkey hunters to become partners with the MDWFP in the conservation and management of Mississippi’s wild turkeys. The best ways you can do this are by participating in the Spring Gobbler Hunting Survey, joining the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf), and reporting wildlife violations by calling 1-800-BE-SMART. You will find applications to participate in the Spring Gobbler Hunting Survey and to join the NWTf in this report.

The Spring Gobbler Hunting Survey is conducted by volunteer hunters and is providing a tremendous database that we use to monitor turkey populations and to make and evaluate management decisions. The Mississippi Chapter of the NWTf is an indispensable part of the MDWFP’s turkey management program. They annually support numerous educational, habitat, law enforcement, and research projects to benefit the state’s wild turkeys and turkey hunters.

If you have any questions or comments concerning turkeys or turkey management, please contact us at anytime!



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Private Lands Habitat Program

The past year brought many changes within the MDWFP; one exciting addition has been the creation of the Private Lands Habitat Program (PLHP). Approximately 80% of Mississippi is privately owned, and adding a team of biologists solely responsible for working with landowners toward habitat improvement provides a unique opportunity for wildlife conservation around the State. Many landowners desire better wildlife management on their properties but simply do not know where to start. PLHP biologists fill this need by providing habitat management recommendations through on-site visits and specially-tailored management plans – essentially giving the landowner a roadmap to follow toward better habitat! And the best news – these services are provided free of charge by the MDWFP!

The goal of the new PLHP is to get landowners actively involved in habitat management on their properties. “Active” management may involve a variety of practices such as prescribed fire, herbicide application, strip disking, restoring native plant communities, timber management, or control of non-native invasive species. Through relationships with PLHP biologists, landowners can gain technical advice and assistance in implementing such practices. Additionally, the PLHP can help landowners potentially avoid some expenses of habitat management by directing landowners toward governmental conservation cost-assistance programs.

The wild turkey should benefit greatly in the MDWFP’s new effort to improve habitat management on private lands. Though turkeys have somewhat general habitat preferences, they still depend on specific habitat needs during certain portions of their life cycle – especially during the nesting and brood rearing periods. An example of how PLHP biologists can help landowners increase their turkey populations would be through identification of habitat-related limiting factors on a particular property, and then providing how-to information on management practices that could address these shortcomings.

For more information on habitat management for private lands, please visit the PLHP website at www.mdwfp.com/privatelands. For a free site visit by a PLHP biologist, landowners are encouraged to directly contact the biologist responsible for their region:



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Photo by Steve Gullledge

How are Turkeys in My Neck of the Woods?



Photo by Steve Gullledge

Mississippi Wild Turkey Population Statistics

based on Spring Gobbler Hunting & Brood Surveys

THE SPRING GOBBLER HUNTING SURVEY (SGHS) WAS INITIATED IN 1996 TO PROVIDE THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks (MDWFP) biological information about the state's wild turkey resource. Each year, cooperating hunters record information about their spring gobbler hunts. The database obtained from this survey assists the MDWFP in monitoring populations and making management decisions in the best interest of the turkey resource and turkey hunters. The Agency appreciates the data collection efforts and comments from all individual hunters and hunting clubs who participate in the SGHS. All turkey hunters, regardless of their ability or experience, are encouraged to participate. This is an opportunity to be directly involved in the conservation and management of the wild turkey in Mississippi. An application for participation in the SGHS is provided in this report.

***This is an opportunity
to be directly involved
in the conservation
& management of
the wild turkey in
Mississippi.***

Private land data from the 2000 – 2007 SGHSs are presented graphically in the following two-page statewide and regional summaries. The remainder of this introduction describes



Photo by Steve Gullledge

how the data were collected and summarized, along with important points to consider during interpretation. Most parameters are expressed as an average number per every 10 or 100 hours of hunting. Standardizing values by a specific number of hours hunted allows the rates to be compared among regions and years even though hunter effort varies.

Reproduction

During June, July, and August, the annual wild turkey brood survey (initiated in 1994) is conducted by personnel from the MDWFP, Mississippi Forestry Commission, U.S. Forest Service, and other cooperators. Brood surveys provide indices to 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 and 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 number of successful hens and is an index to poult survival. "Poults per total hens" is defined as the number of poults observed divided by total number of hens seen. "Poults per total hens" is the most practical reproductive index because it considers successful hens, unsuccessful hens, and poult survival.

Harvest Rates & Age Structure

Harvest rates provide an index to hunter success and population size. Spur lengths generally increase with age and therefore provide an index to age structure of harvested gobblers. Spur lengths are classified into four length categories based on the longer of the two spur measurements for each harvested gobbler. Spurs less than half an inch long are classified as jakes or 1-year-old gobblers. Lengths between a half and one inch are generally 2-years-old. Gobblers at least 3-years-old have spur lengths of one inch or longer. Monitoring spur length distribution should reflect changes in gobbler age structure over time. If age structure is increasing, a higher percentage of the gobblers harvested should be in the larger spur length categories. Spur length distributions are used to monitor the impact of harvest on the gobbler population and to evaluate season lengths and bag limits.

Gobbling Activity

The number of individual gobblers heard and the total number of gobbles heard are used as indices to gobbling activity. Gobbling activity is reported as the average number of gobblers (and 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.

Turkey Observations

Turkey observations are classified as gobblers, jakes, hens, or unknowns. Observation rates are reported as the average number of gobblers, jakes or hens seen during 100 hours of hunting. Total observations combine all turkeys seen, including unknowns. 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.



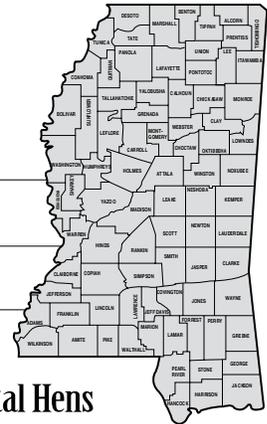
Photo by Steve Gullledge



Photo by Steve Gullledge

Statewide

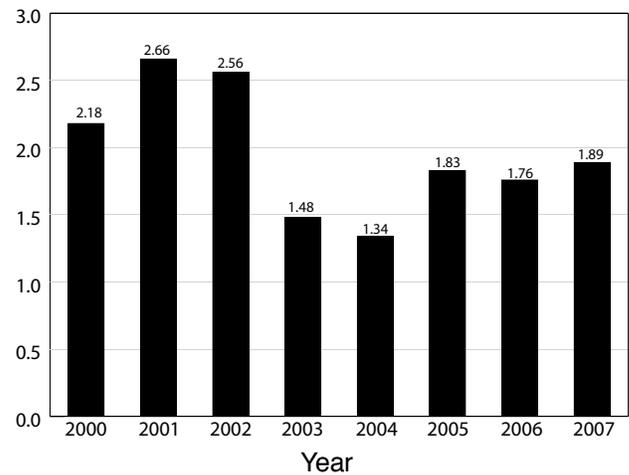
TURKEY HUNTING INFORMATION WAS COLLECTED STATEWIDE ON PRIVATE LAND DURING THE 2007 SEASON BY OVER 60 HUNTING CLUBS AND MORE THAN 600 INDIVIDUAL HUNTERS. DATA WERE RECORDED IN ALL REGIONS OF THE STATE ON PRIVATE LANDS DURING THE 2007 SEASON.



Poults Per Total Hens
Figure 1

Reproduction

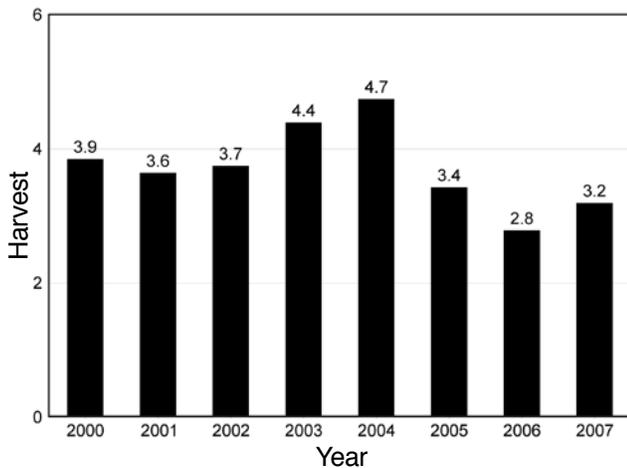
During the 2007 wild turkey brood survey, 2,465 hens were seen. Of these hens, 1,369 (56%) successfully nested and were observed with at least one poult. A total of 4,661 poults were observed and the average brood size was 3.4 poults. The average number of poults for all hens was 1.89 (**Figure 1**), which was slightly higher than the 2006 hatch. During the past 8 years of the survey, poults per total hens has averaged 1.96 and ranged from 1.34 in 2004 to 2.66 in 2001.



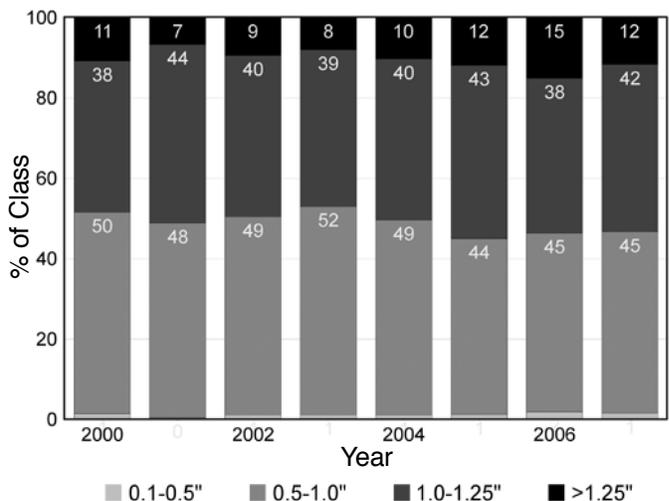
Harvest Rates & Age Structure

The 2007 season showed an increase in harvest rates. On average, hunters harvested 3.2 gobblers for every 100 hours hunted (**Figure 2**). Over the past 8 years, harvest rates have averaged 3.7 gobblers per 100 hours hunted. Age structure was relatively constant with 54% of harvested gobblers being 3+-year-old toms with spur lengths of greater than one inch (**Figure 3**). Of the gobblers harvested, 12% had “limb-hanging” spurs greater than 1.25 inches, while 45% were in the 2-year-old age class.

Harvest Per 100 Hours Hunted
Figure 2



Spur Length Classes (%)
Figure 3

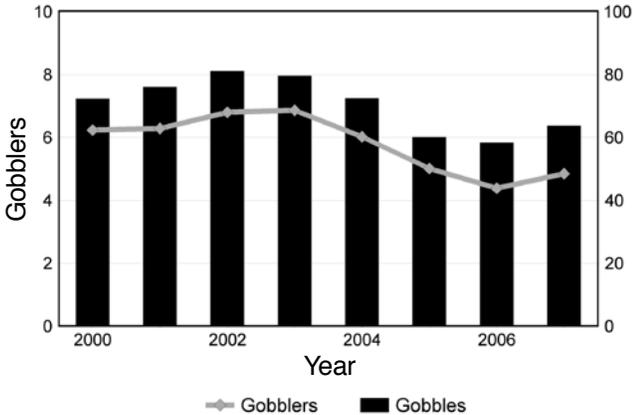


Gobbling Activity

During 2007, seasonal gobbling activity increased somewhat with hunters hearing an average of 4.9 gobblers and 63.8 gobbles for every 10 hours of hunting (Figure 4). The number of gobblers heard was highest during the youth week, while the number of gobbles heard peaked during the second week of the regular hunting season (Figure 5).

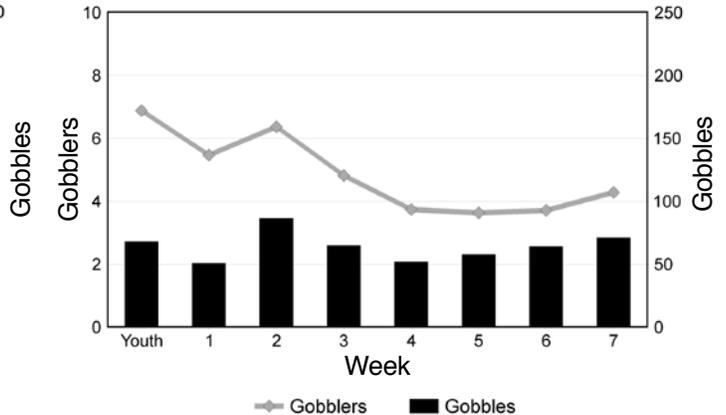
Gobblers & Gobbles Heard Per 10 Hours Hunted By Year

Figure 4



Gobblers & Gobbles Heard Per 10 Hours Hunted By Week

Figure 5

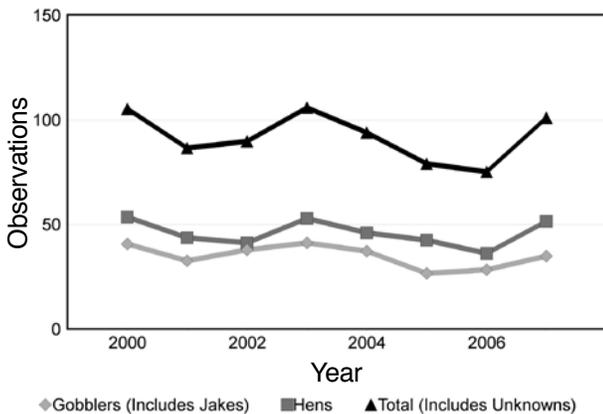


Turkey Observations

During the 2007 season, hunters observed an average of 17.1 adult gobblers, 17.8 jakes, 51.5 hens, and 14.7 unknowns for every 100 hours hunted (Figure 6). Jake observations increased from 2006 (Figure 7), while hen and adult gobbler observations were also up from last year.

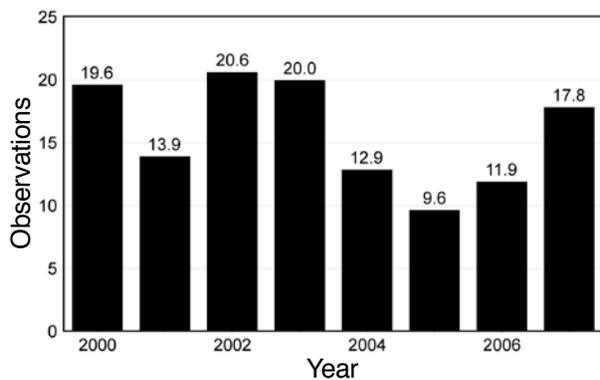
Turkey Observations Per 100 Hours Hunted

Figure 6



Jake Observations Per 100 Hours Hunted

Figure 7



Statewide 2008 Season Forecast

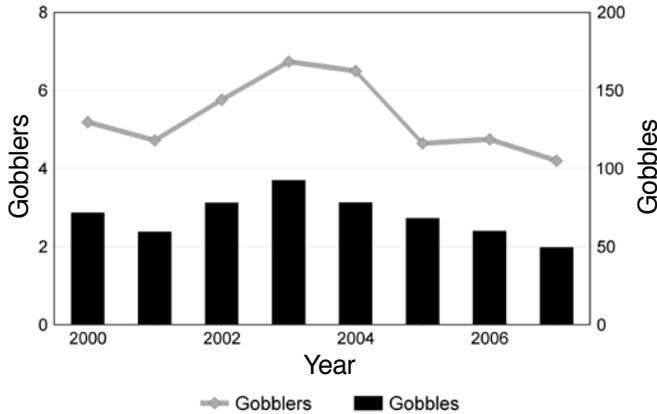
Season predictions are generally made based on the number of 2-year-old gobblers that are expected to be within the population. Two-year-old gobblers typically gobble more than older and younger birds, and are often the easiest to entice into shotgun range. Based on brood survey data from 2006 and jake observations from the spring of 2007, Mississippi turkey hunters should expect to see more 2-year-old gobblers than they saw during the 2007 season and they should expect hunting success to be as good if not better than last year in most areas.

Gobbling Activity

During the 2007 season, hunters heard an average of 4.2 gobblers gobble a total of 49.8 times for every 10 hours hunted (**Figure 4**). Gobbling activity was down slightly from the previous year. The number of gobblers heard was highest during the first and second weeks of the regular season, while number of gobbles heard was highest during weeks 2 and 7 (**Figure 5**).

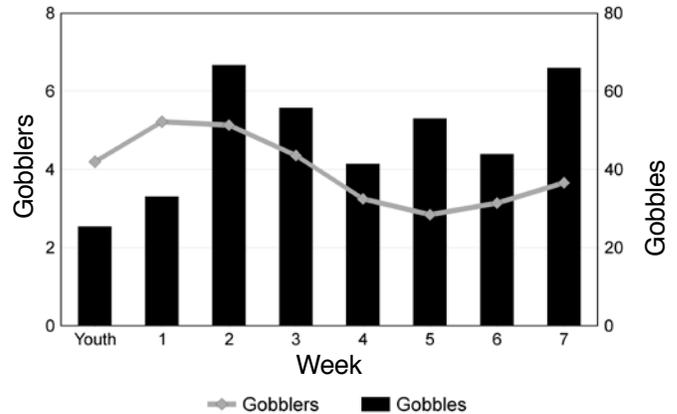
Gobblers & Gobbles Heard Per 10 Hours Hunted By Year

Figure 4



Gobblers & Gobbles Heard Per 10 Hours Hunted By Week

Figure 5

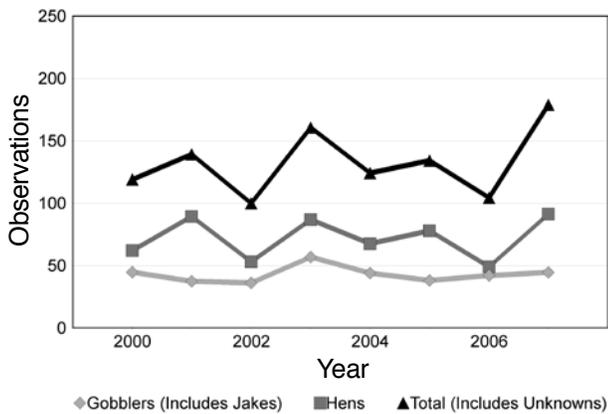


Turkey Observations

On average, hunters observed 178.9 turkeys per 100 hours hunted during the 2007 season (**Figure 6**), which was up significantly from last year. Jake observations increased considerably to 27.7 per 100 hours hunted (**Figure 7**).

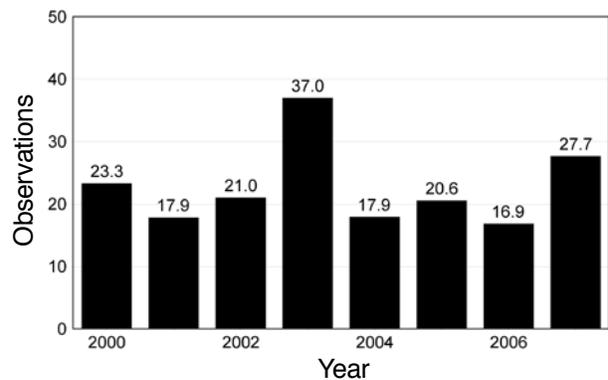
Turkey Observations Per 100 Hours Hunted

Figure 6



Jake Observations Per 100 Hours Hunted

Figure 7

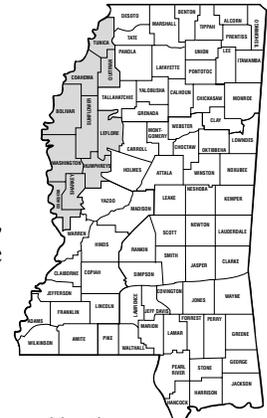


Region 1 2008 Season Forecast

Region 1 has supported good turkey densities during the past few years, and the 2008 season should prove to be very good in this region. During the 2007 hunting season, jake observations were nearly double that of the previous year, so hunters should expect to hear many more gobbling two-year-old birds in 2008!

Turkey Region 2

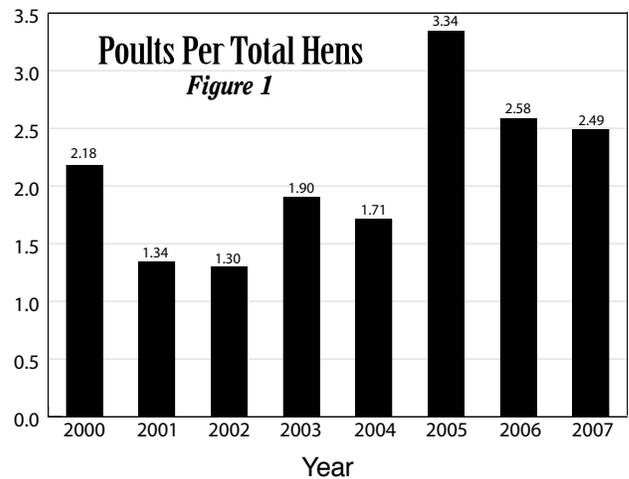
THIS REGION COMPRISES THE TEN DELTA COUNTIES AND IS SUBJECT TO EXTENSIVE, ANNUAL spring flooding that has a major impact on turkey reproduction. The dominant forest type in the Delta is oak-gum-cypress. This region can be subdivided into the batture lands (west of the mainline Mississippi River levee) and the interior floodplain. The batture area is dominated by sugarberry, sycamore, cottonwood, sweetgum, elm, and cypress. Pecan is the only hard mast producer of any significance. The interior Delta consists of extensive agricultural areas containing fragmented hardwood forests interspersed with cypress swamps. The major tree species include overcup oak, Nuttall oak, water oak, green ash, sweetgum, and cottonwood.



Region 2 is unique in that most of the turkey habitat in the interior Delta is on public lands (national forest, wildlife management areas, and wildlife refuges), and the vast majority of the private land habitat is located in the batture lands west of the Mississippi River levee. Therefore, data from the annual brood survey is biased by the majority of turkey observations coming from public lands in the interior Delta, while all the other information in this section is almost exclusively from private lands between the levees.

Reproduction

Region 2 had a good hatch during 2007, with an average of 2.5 poults produced per hen (**Figure 1**) which was similar but down slightly from 2006 (2.6). The average brood size for Region 2 in 2007 was 2.97 and an impressive 83.7% of hens observed were successful in producing poults. Three consecutive good hatches should mean great hunting in this region during 2008 and future years!

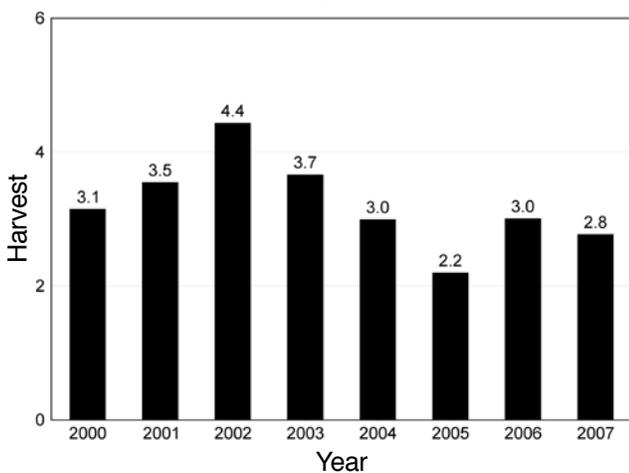


Harvest Rates and Age Structure

During the 2007 season an average of 2.8 gobblers was harvested for every 100 hours of hunting (**Figure 2**), which was slightly down from 2006. Harvest rates for this region should go up during 2008 due to good reproduction. The percentage of 2-year-old birds in the harvest was similar to last year with 32% of the gobblers harvested having spurs from one-half to one inch long (**Figure 3**). Fifty-one percent of the turkeys harvested were 3-year-olds and 13% were 4-years-old or older.

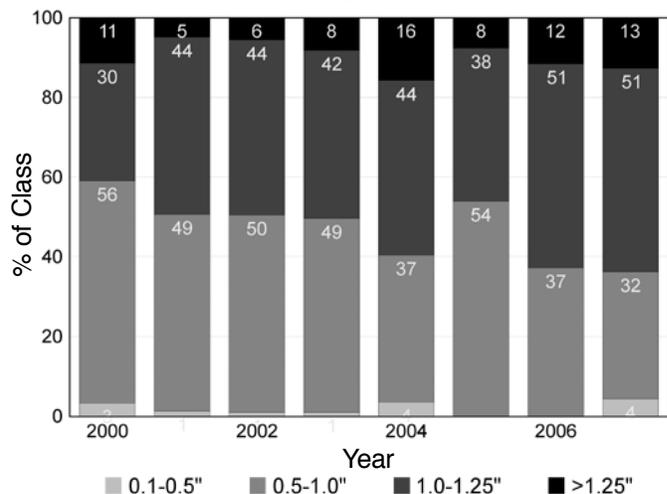
Harvest Per 100 Hours Hunted

Figure 2



Spur Length Classes (%)

Figure 3

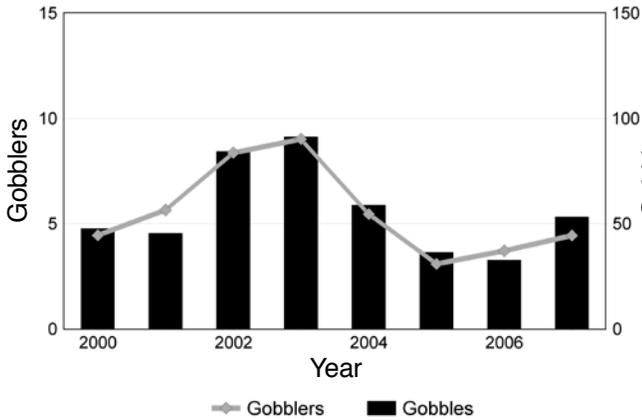


Gobbling Activity

Gobbling activity was up slightly from last year with an average of 4.4 gobblers and 53.3 gobbles heard per 10 hours hunted (**Figure 4**). Number of gobblers heard was highest during the youth hunt, while the number of gobbles heard was relatively constant with a lull during week 4 (**Figure 5**).

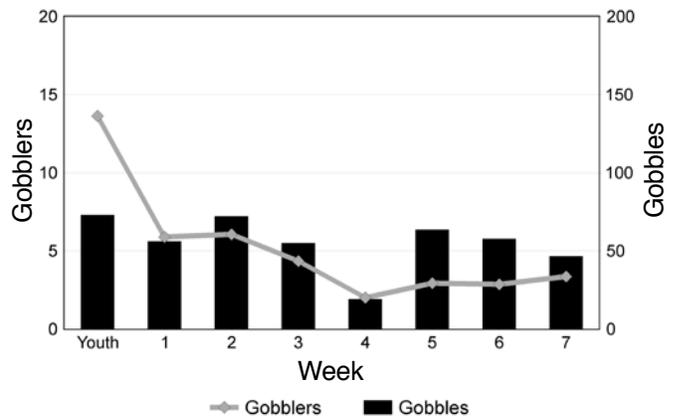
Gobblers & Gobbles Heard Per 10 Hours Hunted By Year

Figure 4



Gobblers & Gobbles Heard Per 10 Hours Hunted By Week

Figure 5

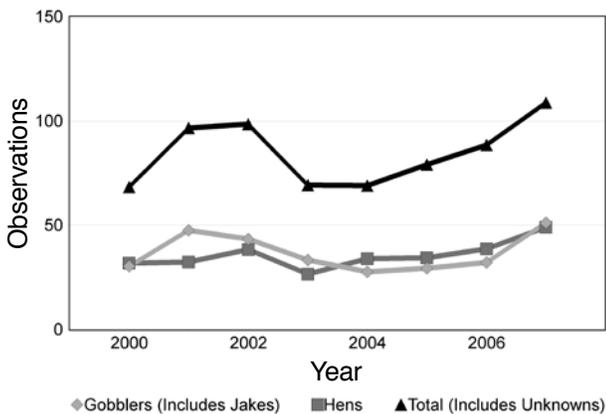


Turkey Observations

Turkey observations increased during the 2007 season. Hunters saw an average of 108.7 turkeys per 100 hours hunted (**Figure 6**). Jake observations increased significantly during 2007 with 34.9 jakes observed per 100 hours hunted (**Figure 7**) which is the highest on record for this region!

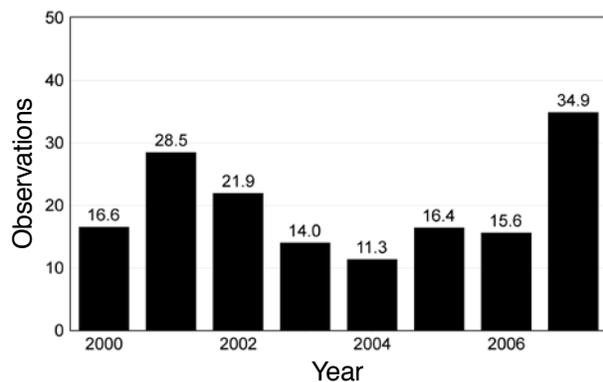
Turkey Observations Per 100 Hours Hunted

Figure 6



Jake Observations Per 100 Hours Hunted

Figure 7

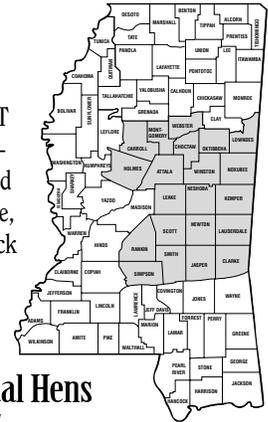


Region 2 2008 Season Forecast

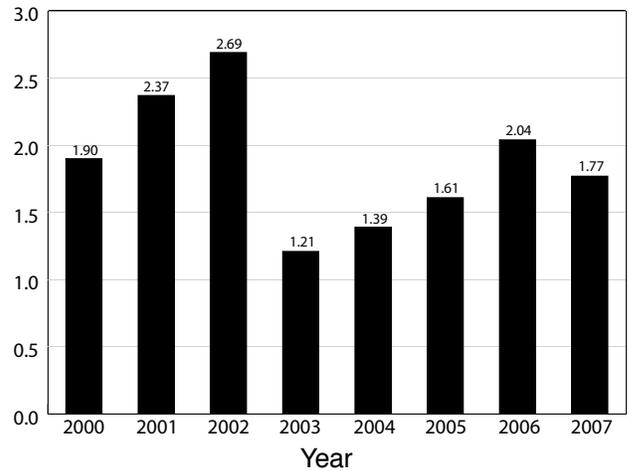
Due to three consecutive years of good production, 2008 should prove to be an excellent year in the Delta, with plenty of two- and three-year-old birds to challenge hunters. An excellent hatch during the spring of 2007 promises that the 2009 season should also be good.

Turkey Region 3

REGION 3 IS THE 21 COUNTY AREA LOCATED IN EAST-CENTRAL MISSISSIPPI. THE TWO MAJOR FOREST types in this region are loblolly-shortleaf pine, which occurs on the drier and more sandy soils, and oak-pine. Loblolly and shortleaf pines constitute more than 50% of the commercial trees in this forest type. Upland hardwoods, primarily various oaks and hickories, make up the rest of the forest community. In the oak-pine type, upland oaks make up more than 50% of the trees with the remaining species including hickories, sweetgum, black gum, loblolly, and shortleaf pines.



Poults Per Total Hens
Figure 1



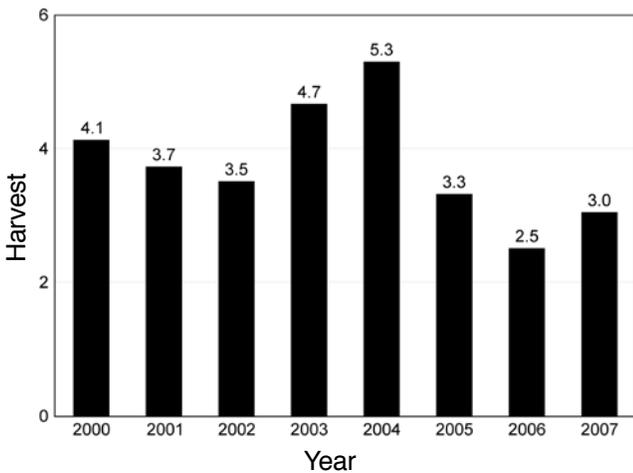
Reproduction

During 2007 we observed an average of 1.8 poults per total hen, which was down from 2006 (**Figure 1**). Forty-six percent of the hens observed successfully raised young and had an average brood size of 3.8 poults.

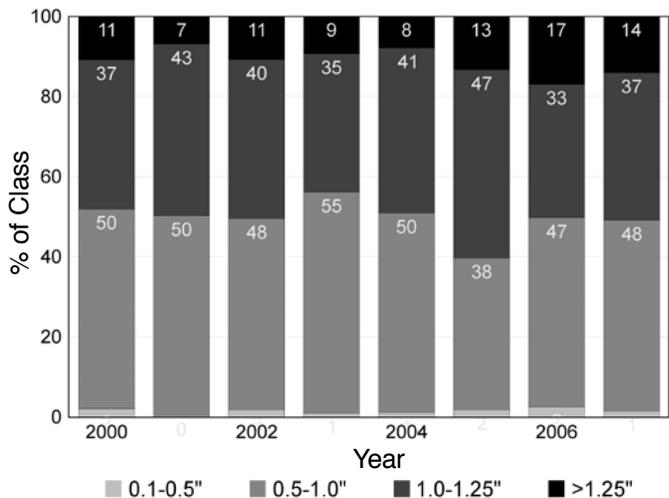
Harvest Rates and Age Structure

Harvest rates increased in Region 3 during the 2007 season. Hunters harvested 3.0 gobblers for every 100 hours of hunting (**Figure 2**). Approximately 51% of gobblers harvested in Region 3 were 3+-years-old with spurs at least 1 inch long (**Figure 3**). Fourteen percent of harvested gobblers in Region 3 were over 4-years-old with spurs greater than 1 ¼ inches long.

Harvest Per 100 Hours Hunted
Figure 2



Spur Length Classes (%)
Figure 3

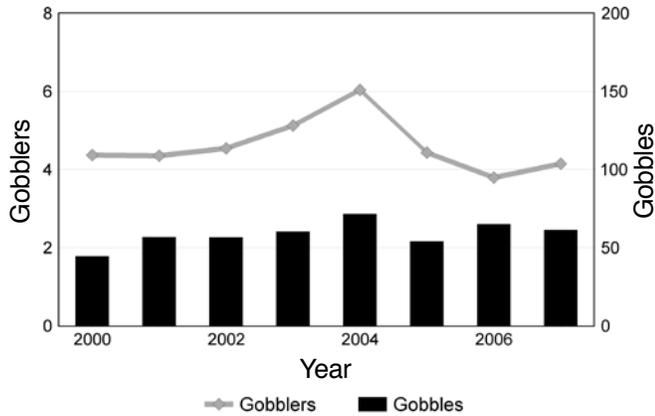


Gobbling Activity

During the 2007 season, gobbling activity was similar to 2006 with hunters hearing an average of 4.2 gobblers gobble 61.3 times for every 10 hours hunted, which was up from last year (Figure 4). Gobbling activity was relatively constant across much of the 2007 season (Figure 5).

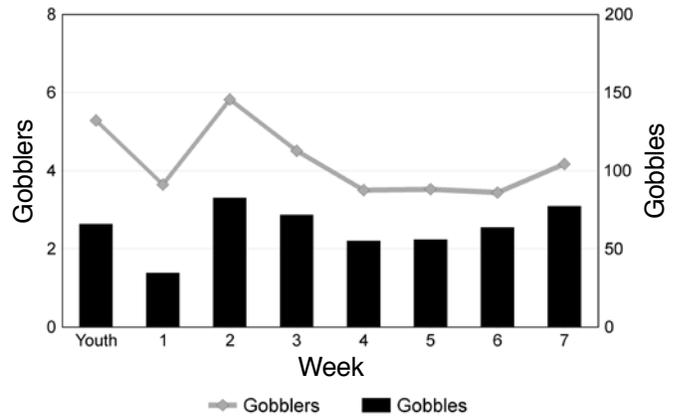
Gobblers & Gobbles Heard Per 10 Hours Hunted By Year

Figure 4



Gobblers & Gobbles Heard Per 10 Hours Hunted By Week

Figure 5

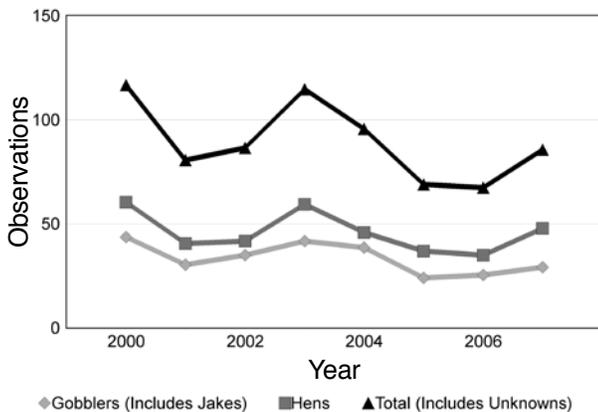


Turkey Observations

During 2007, hunters averaged seeing 85.6 turkeys for every 100 hours of hunting (Figure 6), which was up from 2006. Hunters observed 12.5 jakes per 100 hours hunted which was higher than during 2006 (Figure 7).

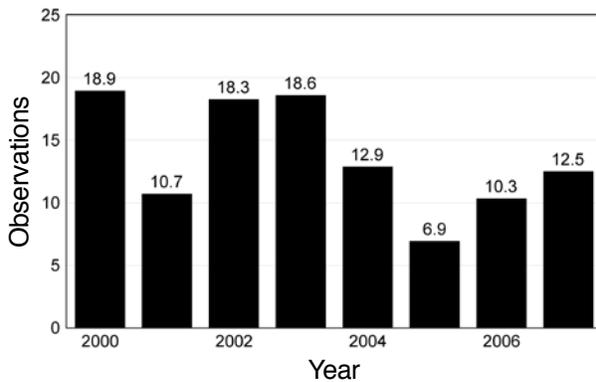
Turkey Observations Per 100 Hours Hunted

Figure 6



Jake Observations Per 100 Hours Hunted

Figure 7



Region 3 2008 Season Forecast

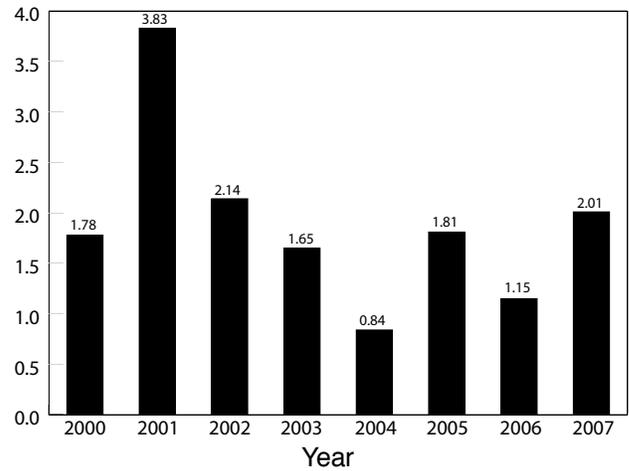
Hunters should expect a season similar to or slightly better than what they experienced during 2007 in Region 3. Jake observation data from the 2007 season indicate a modest increase in jakes observed per 100 hours hunted, which is consistent with a moderate increase in the 2006 brood survey data. This could mean a few more 2-year-old gobblers for hunters to chase this year in Region 3.

Turkey Region 4

TWELVE COUNTIES IN THE SOUTHWEST PORTION OF THE STATE COMPRISE REGION 4. THE OAK-hickory forest type is located along the loess hills bordering the Mississippi River floodplain. Adjacent to the loess hills is a narrow transition zone consisting of the oak-pine forest type. The eastern and southern section of the region is made up of the loblolly-shortleaf pine forest community. Descriptions for these forest types are provided in previous regions.



Poults Per Total Hens
Figure 1



Reproduction

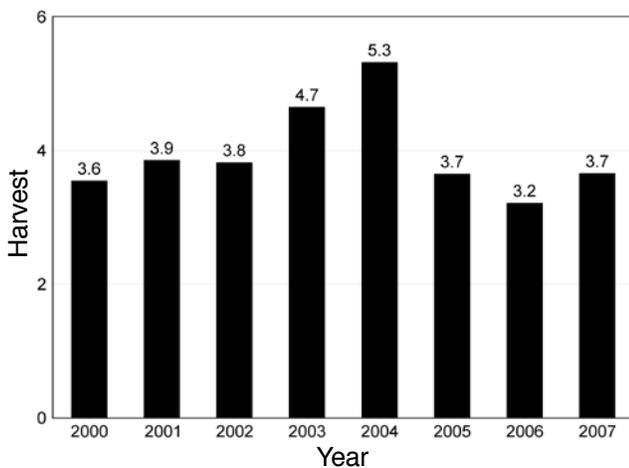
The 2007 brood survey results showed an increase from last year with an average of 2.0 poults produced per hen which was the highest recorded for this region since 2002 (**Figure 1**). Fifty-five percent of observed hens reproduced successfully and average brood size was 1.68 poults.

Harvest Rates and Age Structure

During 2007, the harvest rate in Region 4 was the highest in the state at 3.7 gobblers taken per 100 hours of hunting (**Figure 2**). The percentage of older-aged gobbler in the harvest declined somewhat from last year, with 51% classified as being at least 3-years-old since they had spur lengths greater than or equal to 1 inch (**Figure 3**).

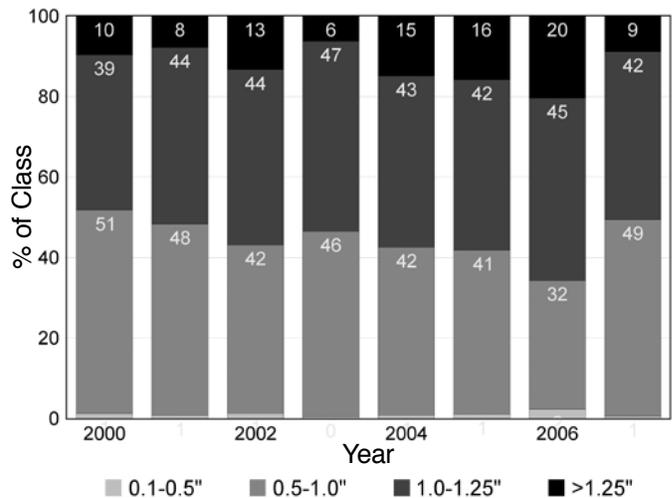
Harvest Per 100 Hours Hunted

Figure 2



Spur Length Classes (%)

Figure 3

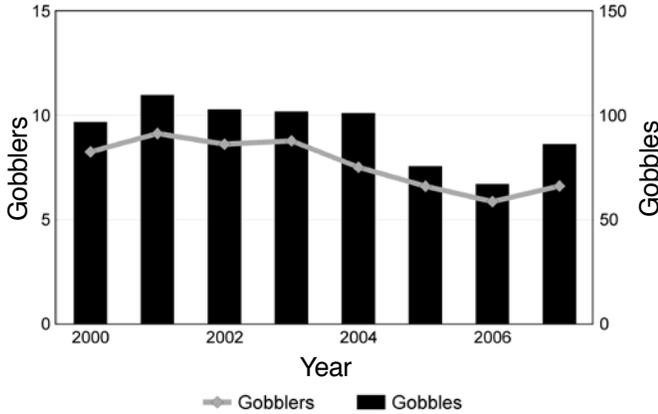


Gobbling Activity

Gobbling activity increased for Region 4 during 2007 with hunters hearing 6.6 gobblers gobble 86.3 times for every 10 hours of hunting (Figure 4). The number of gobblers and gobbles heard both peaked during the second week of the regular turkey season (Figure 5).

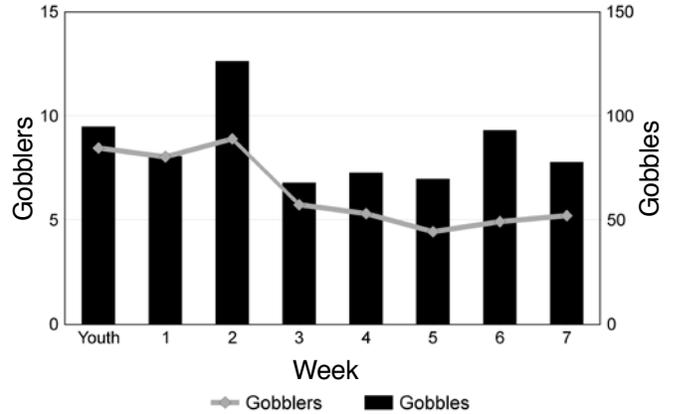
Gobblers & Gobbles Heard Per 10 Hours Hunted By Year

Figure 4



Gobblers & Gobbles Heard Per 10 Hours Hunted By Week

Figure 5

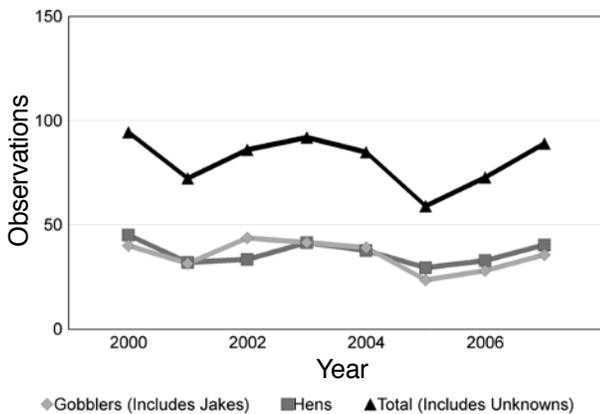


Turkey Observations

For the second consecutive year, turkey observations increased in all categories in Region 4 during the 2007 season. Hen observations during 2007 averaged 40.3 per 100 hours of hunting (Figure 6). Hunters observed 17.2 jakes per 100 hours hunted which is up from 2006 (Figure 7).

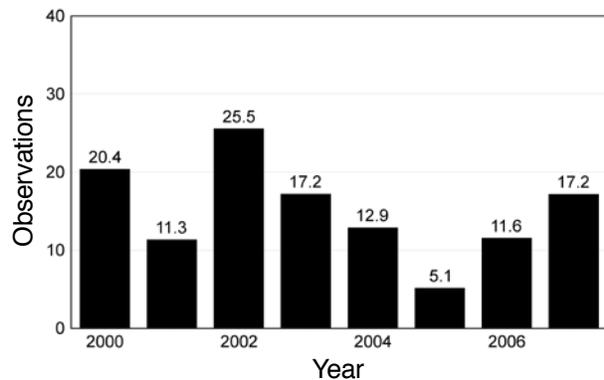
Turkey Observations Per 100 Hours Hunted

Figure 6



Jake Observations Per 100 Hours Hunted

Figure 7

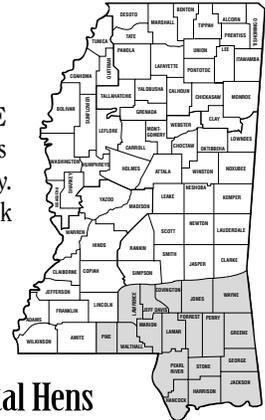


Region 4 2008 Season Forecast

Hunters in this corner of the state should expect the 2008 season to be slightly better than 2007. This can be attributed to the slight increase in the number of jakes seen during the 2007 season. On another positive note, the 2007 hatch was the best since 2002 which should result in hunters seeing an increase in jakes, giving reason to be optimistic about the future.

Turkey Region 5

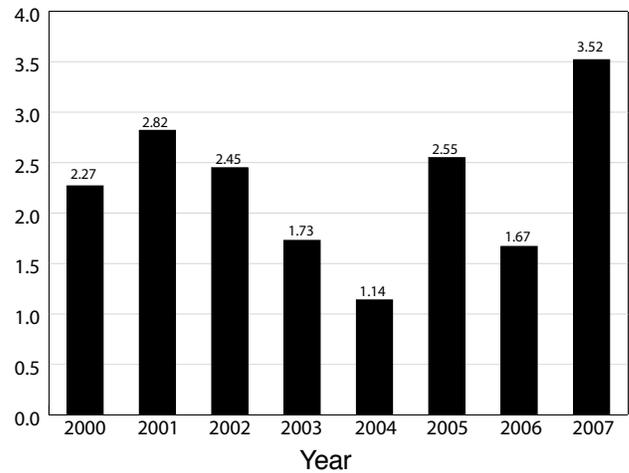
THIS REGION CONSISTS OF 18 COUNTIES IN SOUTHEAST MISSISSIPPI. FORESTS IN REGION 5 ARE dominated by longleaf and slash pine. This habitat type includes the pine flatwoods of the coastal counties and the adjoining, rolling, pine hills. Longleaf pine and slash pine compose at least 50% of the forest community. Other common tree species include dogwood, beech, magnolia and sweet bay along creek bottoms and blackjack oak, post oak and southern red oak on the drier sites.



Poults Per Total Hens
Figure 1

Reproduction

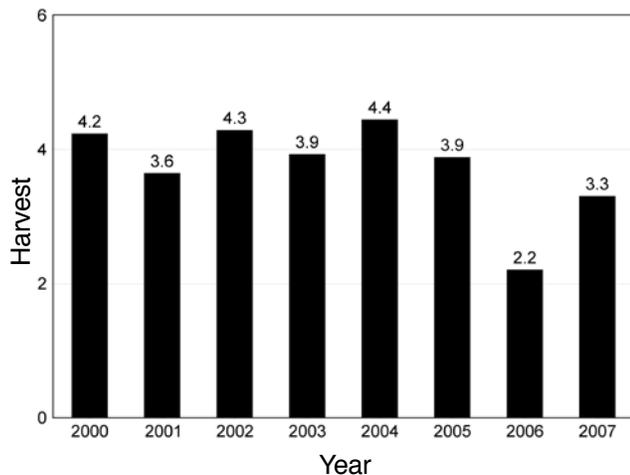
The 2007 hatch was up significantly from 2006. In fact, at 3.5 poults per hen, the 2007 hatch was the highest on record for this region (**Figure 1**). Sixty percent of observed hens nested successfully and had an amazing average brood size of 5.9 poults!



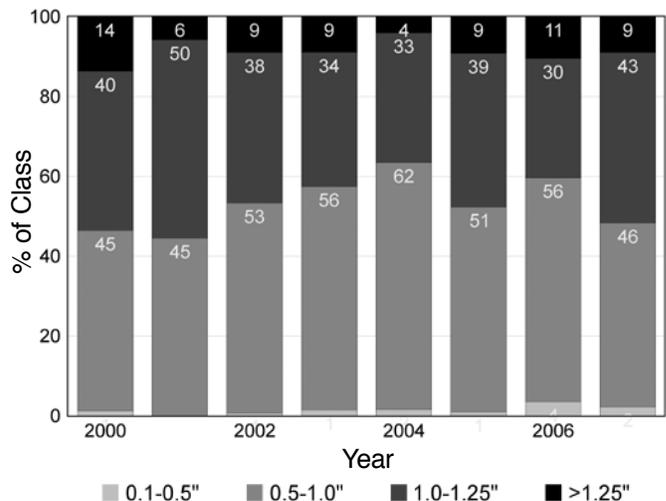
Harvest Rates and Age Structure

Harvest rates in Region 5 increased from the previous season with hunters harvesting an average of 3.3 gobblers for every 100 hours hunted (**Figure 2**). Forty-six percent of the birds harvested in Region 5 during the 2007 season were 2-years-old with spurs from ½ - 1 inch in length (**Figure 3**). Forty-three percent of harvested gobblers were 3-years-old with spurs from 1 - 1 ¼ inches long and 9% of harvested gobblers had spurs > 1 ¼ inches long.

Harvest Per 100 Hours Hunted
Figure 2



Spur Length Classes (%)
Figure 3

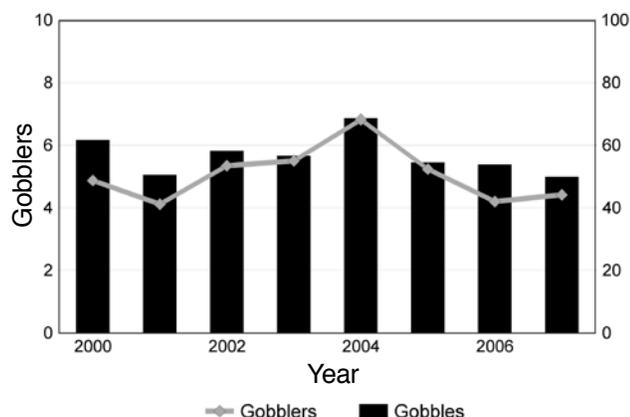


Gobbling Activity

Gobbling activity in Region 5 during the 2007 season was similar to that observed during 2006. On average, hunters heard 4.4 gobblers gobble 49.9 times for every 10 hours hunted (Figure 4). The number of gobblers heard was highest during the youth hunt, while number of gobbles heard peaked during weeks 2, 3, and 7 (Figure 5).

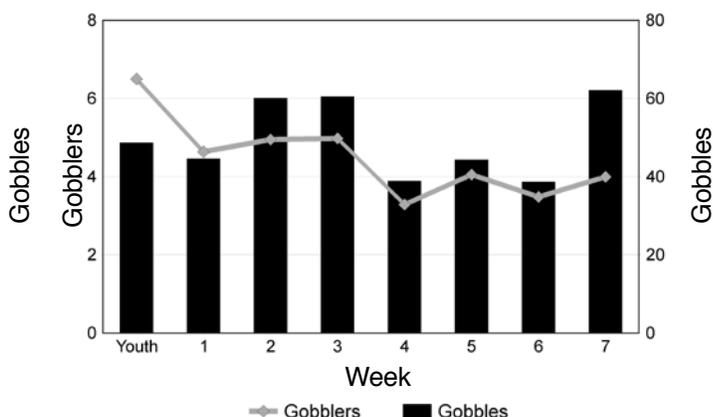
Gobblers & Gobbles Heard Per 10 Hours Hunted By Year

Figure 4



Gobblers & Gobbles Heard Per 10 Hours Hunted By Week

Figure 5

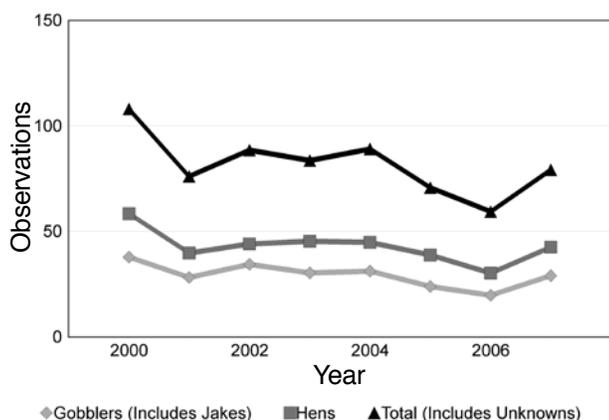


Turkey Observations

Turkey hunters saw an average of 79.1 turkeys per 100 hours of hunting during the 2007 season (Figure 6), which was up from 2006. Jake observations increased with 12.2 observed per 100 hours hunted (Figure 7).

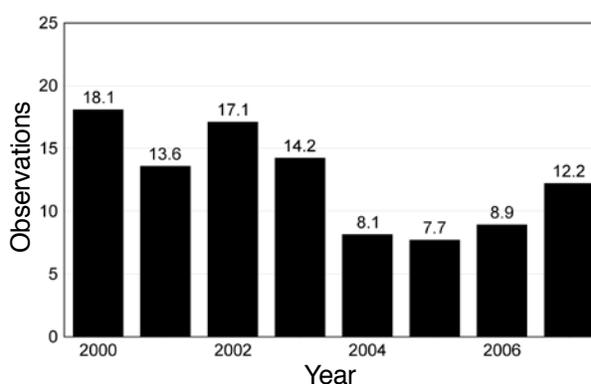
Turkey Observations Per 100 Hours Hunted

Figure 6



Jake Observations Per 100 Hours Hunted

Figure 7



Region 5 2008 Season Forecast

Harvest in this section of the state has been down somewhat since 2005 partly due to hurricane Katrina, but populations seem to have begun the road to recovery and hunters should experience a better season in 2008 than they did last year. Jake observations were up last year, and were near the region's long-term average. Also, Region 5 saw a much improved hatch last year, possibly the best in the state, so an abundance of jakes should make hunters enthusiastic about their chances during next year's season.



Magnolia State Turkey Talk



The Mississippi Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation

Thanks to the hard work and dedication of our many volunteers, the Mississippi Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation continues to advance our mission of conservation of the wild turkey and preservation of the hunting tradition. Together, we accomplished a great deal in 2007 and we are looking forward to carrying this momentum into 2008.

The Mississippi Chapter was recognized by the Mississippi House of Representatives, which passed a floor resolution honoring the accomplishments of the Mississippi Chapter. In addition, the Mississippi Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks passed a resolution honoring the contributions of the Mississippi Chapter to wildlife conservation. The Mississippi Chapter was humbled to accept these honors on behalf of the thousands of NWTF volunteers and members who make this organization such a great success.

The Mississippi Chapter co-hosted the second annual Wheelin' Sportsmen Youth Deer Hunt with Bass Pro Shops and the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks in November. Expanding in the success of this event in 2006, the 2007 event grew to nearly 50 youth with disabilities who participated and harvested over 40 deer. Preparations for the 2008 event are already under way and we look forward to an even bigger and better event this year!

The National Wild Turkey Federation entered into a cooperative agreement with the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks in 2007 to fill a cooperative biologist position. As a result of this agreement, NWTF now has a Regional Biologist who spends a majority of his time working cooperatively with the MDWFP Wild Turkey Program on wild turkey habitat and conservation issues in the state.

Local chapters continue to have a positive impact on wild turkeys and turkey hunters by hosting JAKES, WITO, and Wheelin' Sportsmen events, awarding scholarships to graduating seniors, providing JAKES Education Boxes to local schools, and funding habitat enhancement projects statewide.

These accomplishments would not be possible without volunteers and members who are passionate about conserving the wild turkey and preserving our hunting heritage, and these accomplishments are a testament to all of those who are willing to donate their time, energy, and talents to our cause. I sincerely thank each of you for all you do.

If you would like to become more involved in the NWTF, please contact our two Regional Directors, your local chapter president or one of our officers or board members. If you are not a member, join now and be a part of the greatest conservation organization in the world. It is only through the efforts and dedication of the members that the Mississippi Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation is what it is and what it will become.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve the Mississippi Chapter and the NWTF.

Alan Sumrall – President
Mississippi Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation

NWTF Supports Mississippi's Acorns for Wildlife Initiative

For the fourth year, NWTF partnered with the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks to provide landowners state-wide an opportunity to purchase native oak seedlings at a reduced cost through Mississippi's Acorns for Wildlife Initiative.

Mississippi's Acorns for Wildlife Initiative provides high quality, hard mast-producing native oak seedlings to Mississippi landowners. The program is made possible by partnerships between the National Wild Turkey Federation's Mississippi Chapter and Greater Jackson Chapter, Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks, Mississippi Forestry Commission, and Mississippi State University Extension Service.

According to NWTF Regional Biologist Joe Koloski, acorns are an excellent wildlife food source during winter months, but are in short supply throughout much of the state. The quality native oak seedlings offered to landowners through this program attract and benefit wildlife while improving opportunities for hunters and wildlife watchers.

Koloski emphasizes the importance of planting native seedlings to improve habitat conditions. "The high quality native oak seedlings provided through this program are grown from acorns collected in Mississippi," Koloski says. "Trees grown from these native acorns will adapt to conditions in Mississippi more easily than seedlings grown from non-native acorns."

The NWTF Greater Jackson Chapter contributed \$4,000 to this project, and the Mississippi State Chapter contributed \$5,000 from the NWTF Hunting Heritage Super Fund.

The program is open to any landowners that would like to participate. Orders for the 2009 planting season will be accepted beginning October 2008. For more information about the Mississippi Acorns for Wildlife Program or to be placed on the mailing list to receive an order form, contact Joe Koloski by telephone at 601.454.4455, or by email at jkoloskinwtf@yahoo.com.



NWTF Partners with MDWFP and Bass Pro Shops to Host Second Annual Wheelin' Sportsmen Youth Deer Hunt

Fifty young people with disabilities spent a weekend enjoying deer hunting, food, and fellowship at the second Wheelin' Sportsmen NWTF Deer Hunt for Youth with Disabilities in Pearl, Miss., Nov. 2 to Nov. 4, 2007.

The event, which drew nearly twice as many participants as last year's event, took place on private landowners' property. All meals and other weekend activities, including archery, paintball, fishing, and air rifle, took place at the Bass Pro Shops Outdoor World in Pearl.

Wheelin' Sportsmen NWTF provides all people with disabilities the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors through local chapter events nationwide.

Tyler Lee, 15, of Picayune, Miss., contributed to the weekend's 37 deer taken by bagging his first deer, a doe, during the Saturday morning hunt and a 5-point buck later that afternoon. Lee, who became paralyzed from the waist down after falling from a tree house last year, was excited to take part in an event that emphasized his hunting abilities.



Participants, parents, hosts, and guides pose with a doe harvested during the 2007 Wheelin' Sportsmen Youth Deer Hunt.

“After I got hurt, I’ve been confident since day one,” Lee said. “I haven’t felt sorry for myself, and I wasn’t worried about hunting after my accident.” When asked about how it felt to take his first deer, Lee said, “I can’t even explain it.”

Activities began on Friday afternoon, with a benefit dinner and auction. Local landowners and guides took participants hunting Saturday morning and afternoon with a break in the middle of the day for lunch and more outdoor events. There was a Sunday morning hunt, followed by a show and tell session, testimonials, and a church service.

“Last weekend was a huge success, from the landowners and guides donating their time to Bass Pro, the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, the NWTF Mississippi Chapter, Greater Jackson Chapter and other local chapters co-hosting the event,” said Illana Burkhart, assistant national coordinator for Wheelin’ Sportsmen. “Seeing these young people with smiles on their faces, getting to enjoy activities they otherwise may not have the chance to enjoy is what the Wheelin’ Sportsmen program is all about.”

Whether it is shooting, hunting, fishing or archery, there is no limit to the outdoor opportunities Wheelin’ Sportsmen NWTF can bring to a person with disabilities eager to get outside and participate in a more active lifestyle. The program also provides a full-color, quarterly magazine to its members. Wheelin’ Sportsmen magazine is dedicated to the education and entertainment of outdoors enthusiasts with disabilities.



NWTF Partners with MDWFP to Field Cooperative Biologist

The National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) has a long history of positive working relationships with state and federal wildlife and land management agencies. NWTF has collaborated with agencies on important conservation issues, provided funding for equipment and habitat enhancement, and supported agency initiatives promoting increased hunting opportunity and participation.

Recently, the NWTF has taken this relationship to the next level in a number of southeastern states by partnering with state and federal agencies to field NWTF Cooperative Biologists. Although NWTF has employed Regional Biologists in the southeast for close to 10 years, the regions covered by NWTF biologists have encompassed 3 to 7 states. Although NWTF has been successful in advancing its mission of wild turkey conservation and preservation of the hunting tradition, many opportunities were missed due to multiple-state regions.

Over the past year, NWTF has partnered with state and federal agencies to field NWTF Cooperative Biologists in Texas, Arkansas, Georgia, Florida, and most recently in Mississippi. Through these partnerships, NWTF Cooperative Biologists are able to focus their efforts in a smaller geographic area and work more efficiently to have a positive impact on wildlife habitat. These partnerships have been very successful, allowing NWTF to more successfully compete for funding from federal and private granting sources, increase availability to provide technical assistance to agency partners and private landowners, and provide a more consistent voice promoting wildlife conservation and the hunting tradition.

Through a partnership between the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, the NWTF, and the Mississippi Chapter of the NWTF, a NWTF Cooperative Biologist is now stationed in Mississippi. Primary duties of the MDWFP/NWTF Cooperative Biologist will be to: Coordinate habitat enhancement projects on public lands; coordinate the Acorns for Wildlife Program; develop and administer grants for habitat enhancement projects; assist the MDWFP Turkey Program with the Spring Gobbler Hunting Survey, annual Wild Turkey Program Report, and Wild Turkey Brood Survey; provide technical guidance to state and federal agencies and private landowners; and to act as a liaison between NWTF and state and federal wildlife and land management agencies.

Joe Koloski will be serving as the MDWFP/NWTF Cooperative Biologist. Joe has been employed as a Regional Wildlife Biologist with NWTF for 5 years. Although he and his family have made Mississippi their home, Joe has been responsible for as many as 7 states in the southeastern United States. He is looking forward to the opportunity this partnership provides to focus on making a greater impact for wildlife and hunters in Mississippi.

The creation of this position is a positive step for both MDWFP and NWTF, and both groups are very excited to begin making a greater impact on wildlife habitat, the wild turkey resource, and the sportsmen and sportswomen of Mississippi.

Mississippi Legislature Honors NWTF With Floor Resolution

Honorable Eric Robinson, chairman of the Mississippi Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks committee, recognized the National Wild Turkey Federation's Mississippi Chapter on the floor of the Legislature.

Robinson presented a framed resolution to NWTF Mississippi Chapter vice president Scott Cumbest, Mississippi Chapter secretary Kenny Odom, and Joe Wood on Feb. 28, 2007 at the Capitol building.

"It's a real honor to be recognized for our efforts here in Mississippi," said Wood, NWTF regional director for Mississippi. "Neither the NWTF or our volunteers work for recognition, but it's nice to know that people appreciate what we're doing."

Also in attendance was Mississippi Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks Assistant Chief of Wildlife Ron Seiss. Seiss has worked closely with the NWTF to enhance wildlife habitat, encourage responsible hunting, and promote the hunting traditions of Mississippi.

Robinson honored the NWTF for their efforts promoting conservation and hunting throughout Mississippi and North America. It is with great pleasure that we honor the NWTF," Robinson said. "This organization is made up of thousands of our greatest citizens. They go to work and honor their families, and they are productive tax paying citizens who give back through the NWTF to ensure that the noble wild turkey will be here for us all to enjoy throughout future generations."

NWTF Mississippi chapters and volunteers have spent more than \$1.3 million in the Magnolia State on habitat enhancement and outreach projects such as hunter education, food plot development, prescribed fire, and tree plantings.

These projects have improved wildlife populations and hunting opportunities throughout the state. In addition, the NWTF has been an outspoken advocate for reducing barriers for youth and novice hunters to ensure the future of conservation and hunting. To that end, the NWTF supported Mississippi's apprentice hunting license law that allows licensed adults over the age of 21 to take newcomers age 16 and over hunting for one year before completion of a hunter education course.



NWTF Partners with MDWFP to Create Permanent Openings on Wildlife Management Areas

The Mississippi Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation partnered with the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks to create permanent openings on 3 wildlife management areas.

The Mississippi Chapter contributed a total of \$16,780.00 through the Mississippi Hunting Heritage Super Fund to this project.



Permanent openings were created on Leaf River WMA through funding from the Mississippi Hunting Heritage Super Fund.



Funding provided by the Mississippi Chapter NWTF through the Mississippi Hunting Heritage Super Fund helped the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks create linear openings on Yockanookany WMA.



Contributed funds were used to help offset contractor costs associated with creating 77 acres of permanent openings on Yockanookany, Copiah County, and Leaf River Wildlife Management Areas.

This project enhanced wild turkey habitat by creating excellent brood-rearing habitat, which is often a limiting habitat component throughout much of Mississippi.

The Mississippi Hunting Heritage Super Fund helped the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks create this permanent opening on Copiah County WMA.



NWTF Receives Grant to Treat Cogongrass

The National Wild Turkey Federation received a \$15,000.00 grant from BASF to treat cogongrass infestations on private land in Mississippi.

Cogongrass is a non-native invasive weed and is considered one of the world's 10 worst invasive weeds. Native to Asia, cogongrass was first introduced to the United States in the early 1900's when its light, fluffy seed was used as packing material in shipping containers entering Mobile Bay. Cogongrass has spread throughout much of southern Alabama and Mississippi.

Cogongrass is a very aggressive plant, displacing native vegetation. It has no wildlife habitat value and poses a wild-fire threat because it is very volatile when burned. Although many methods to control cogongrass have been tried, herbicide applications are the most effective.

NWTF partnered with the Coastal Plains RC&D Council in Wiggins to complete this project. The Coastal Plains RC&D council also donated \$15,000.00 to the project. Project activities were focused on private lands adjacent to the DeSoto National Forest. Private landowners with cogongrass infestations were identified and herbicides were applied by professional applicators in July 2007.

Roughly 80 acres were treated in 2007, and NWTF will receive \$20,000.00 from BASF to continue the project in 2008. The Coastal Plains RC&D Council will participate again in 2008, providing \$20,000.00 in matching funds.



A contractor applies herbicides to cogongrass as part of the BASF cogongrass grant project.



NWTF Conducts 2 Landowner Workshops

The National Wild Turkey Federation conducted 2 Wild Turkey Woodlands Landowner Workshops in Mississippi in 2007. Workshops were conducted at Coontail Farm in Aberdeen and at Rhoden Farm in Johns.

Workshops were conducted in a field setting, where participants could see examples of wildlife habitat enhancement techniques in use on the host properties. Participants also learned about cost-share programs available to private landowners in Mississippi.

A total of 72 landowners with management control of over 31,000 acres attended the two events. Landowner workshops for 2008 are now in the planning stages. If you are interested in learning more about landowner workshops scheduled for 2008, contact Joe Koloski at 601.454.4455.

Turkey Hunting: More Than Killing Birds

Submitted by Bruce West

Over the years that I have been chasing wild turkeys, there are a few things I have learned about my turkey hunting style and the real reasons why I hunt turkeys.

First, I'm not a great caller. Simple yelps, clucks and an occasional cackle are about the extent of my calling skills. Second, my greatest assets are persistence and the willingness to sit still as long as necessary to get the job done. Third, I will never be considered a great turkey hunter in some people's opinion. In my 25-plus years of turkey hunting, I have failed to take my legal limit of gobblers in Mississippi more times than I want to remember.

Real turkey hunting involves more than keeping score on the number of birds taken in a lifetime. In my view, real turkey hunters should be judged on how they approach their hunting as a whole.

I have put together a short list of positive items that should make any season great for a real turkey hunter.

Gobbling turkeys – Some of my most memorable days in the woods have been those days I came home empty-handed. I was able to work a gobbling turkey, but he refused to be drawn away from his hens. Most hunters think of this type of hunt as a failure, but I thank the Lord for gobbling turkeys.

Beautiful hardwood bottoms – One of the most beautiful scenes in a spring morning is the white blossoms of the dogwoods set against the backdrop of an open oak bottom. The final touch to this picture is when a gobbler struts across the opening, headed in your direction. Many people fail to see the beauty of this scene, but to me this is beauty only God can paint in the natural world He created.

Sunrise in the woods – Another beautiful sight is to see the early morning sun as it filters through the woods while you sit waiting for a gobbler that may or may not come. If I had only taken pictures of all the beautiful sunrises I have enjoyed over the years, it would fill up one of those big coffee table books.

Fellowship with close friends – There are fond memories of mornings spent riding to the hunt and in the woods with my relatives and good friends. When you work together calling in a bird that has burned you for several days straight, you really work as a team.

After the hunt, whether we get a bird or not, we go over the day's events as we ride in. We stress the high points and attempt to figure out what we did wrong. Good friends make the hunt come to life again each time it is talked about, and naturally, each time the story gets better.

Hen and jake behavior – Hens and jakes provide some of the best entertainment, as well as some of the best call training available. Conversing with a vocal hen while using a mouth call is a lot of fun, especially when she's only a short distance away. She knows you are there but just hasn't seen you yet.

Jakes are even more fun as they struggle from the juvenile to the adult stage. Many times they run to the most awful calling imaginable and try to strut and act like a big, bad gobbler.

These comments may not mean much to some people who call themselves turkey hunters. That's fine, but real turkey hunters will hopefully appreciate them. There are many other positive aspects that make turkey hunting enjoyable.

I hope people will do their best to be ethical and, most of all, safe hunters this year. I also urge hunters to join and support the National Wild Turkey Federation. This organization does a great job of working to promote the expansion of the wild turkey and the continued availability of turkey habitat.

Remembering these things will help REAL turkey hunters have a great season!

Chapter News Briefs

Mississippi Chapter: For the second year in a row, teachers visiting the Mississippi Chapter booth at the 2007 Wildlife Extravaganza in Jackson were invited to participate in free drawings for educational aids for their school. Grades K-6 teachers were allowed to participate in a drawing for one of four “Wild About Turkey Education Boxes”, and grades 7-12 teachers were allowed to participate in a drawing for one of two books entitled “Forest Plants of the Southeast and Their Wildlife Uses.” Box winners were East Jones Elementary, Ocean Springs Middle School, St. Richard School (Jackson) and Warrenton Elementary (Vicksburg). Book winners were Brandon High School and Southeast Lauderdale High School.

The Mississippi Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation partnered with the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks (MDWFP) to provide clover seed for wildlife management areas statewide. The Mississippi Chapter donated \$6,000.00 through the Mississippi Hunting Heritage Super Fund and this amount was matched by MDWFP. Nearly 3,000 pounds of clover seed was purchased and planted on 285 acres through this partnership. Clover plantings provide excellent brood-rearing habitat for wild turkeys as well as foraging habitat for other wildlife.

Twenty Mississippi callmakers contributed calls to the 2008 Mississippi callmakers collection offered at the Mississippi Chapter NWTF Awards Banquet held February 1 at Bass Pro Shops in Pearl. Another collection will be offered at the 32nd NWTF convention and sport show in Atlanta.

Greater Jackson Chapter: The Greater Jackson Chapter hosted the 14th annual Boyd Burrow Memorial Wild Turkey Scramble at Patrick Farms Golf Club in Brandon. A full field of 36 four-person teams participated in the fundraising golf tournament this year. The Greater Jackson Chapter has been extremely successful with this event, raising over \$100,000 over the 14-year history of the tournament. Funds generated through the tournament have been used to support a variety of projects including:

- \$28,500 to create the Boyd Burrow Memorial Endowment Scholarship in the Mississippi State University College of Forest Resources.
- \$25,000 in scholarships for graduating high school seniors.
- \$15,000 to support the Catch-a-Dream Foundation.
- \$10,000 to support the American Heart Association, National Kidney Foundation, Blair E. Batson Children’s Hospital, and the American Cancer Society.

The Greater Jackson Chapter will be recognized for its outstanding achievements at the 32nd annual NWTF Convention and Sports Show in Atlanta, GA. The chapter will receive a LA Dixon Outstanding Chapter award for achieving “Golden Gobbler” status for 15 years. This is truly a remarkable achievement, with only 23 chapters nationwide having achieved Golden Gobbler for 15 years.

North Monroe Longbeards Chapter: The North Monroe Longbeards Chapter donated twenty-two frozen turkeys and a ham to the Amory Food Pantry and the Monroe County Home. This was the Chapter’s second year to participate in the National Wild Turkey Federation’s Turkey Hunters Care program, increasing their last years’ donation by two turkeys and one ham. The Chapter also planted oak trees through the Operation Oak program at three different locations across Monroe County to benefit wildlife.

North Waterway Chapter: The North Waterway Chapter hosted a JAKES conservation field day on October 20, 2007 at Jackson’s Camp Youth and Handicap area on Bay Springs Lake. The event was co-hosted by the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks and the US Army Corps of Engineers. This was the fifth year the chapter has hosted a JAKES event. This year, the chapter chose to conduct an Extreme JAKES event, with activities geared toward the 8-15 year old age group. Over 30 Extreme JAKES participated in the event, which featured activities including archery, .22 caliber rifle shooting, skeet, and a virtual hunting experience. Many volunteers and partners contributed to the success of the event including US Army Corps of Engineers employees Harry Stone and Garvin Gray and MDWFP employee Jerry Hazlewood. A total of 73 participants and volunteers attended the event.

Tallahala Longbeards Chapter: The Tallahala Longbeards Chapter (TLC) sponsored a JAKES Conservation Class during the 2006-07 school term for third graders at Sylva-Bay Academy in Bay Springs. The last class program of the school year consisted of a field trip to Marathon Lake Recreation Area in the Bienville National Forest.

The Tallahala Longbeards Chapter also hosted its inaugural Elmo Pugh Memorial Conservation Day in Jasper County on November 10, 2007. The event was co-hosted by the Elmo and Irene Pugh family. Over 20 JAKES participated in the event, which consisted of a morning of activities including conservation education and firearms safety and practice. Participants were treated to a barbecue lunch and an afternoon deer hunt. Many of the JAKES either saw or had opportunities to harvest deer, and 2 lucky participants harvested does.

Smith County Chapter: During 2007, the Smith County Chapter (SCC) hosted two hunts for the Wounded Warriors organization. Wounded Warriors is an organization created to benefit wounded veterans. Five Warriors participated in a weekend spring turkey hunt in which two turkeys were harvested. During deer season, twelve Warriors participated in a weekend deer hunt with seven deer harvested. Wounded Warriors from all parts of the United States participated in the Smith County hunts. Angela Boykin of Laurel coordinated the events between the Wounded Warriors and the SCC.

Turkey Callers Compete at Mississippi Championship

Some of the best callers in Mississippi and the region competed Saturday, February 2 at the Bass Pro Shops in Pearl for cash prizes and the prestige of being named the state's best turkey caller. A number of divisions of competition were available including youth and intermediate divisions, and for the first time a women's division.

This was a NWTF sanctioned calling contest with winners of the Mississippi open and Mississippi championship qualifying to compete in the NWTF Grand National calling contest held each year at the NWTF Convention and Sport Show.

Bass Pro Shops hosted the event and held the Bass Pro Open calling contest in conjunction with the Mississippi Championship. The Okatibbee Chapter coordinated the calling contest.



Top placers in the Mississippi Open were: 1st – Joe Drake (l), 2nd – Jason Conrad (c), 3rd – Corey Melton (r).



Top placers in the friction division were: 1st – Glenn Bufkin (r), 2nd – Chuck Rose (c), and 3rd – Tim Giles.



Top placers in the Gene Nunnery memorial division were: 1st – Austin Newell (r), 2nd – Daniel Smith (c), and 3rd – Jacob Johnson (l).



Haley Long won the women's division. Betsy Lipscomb, who is not pictured, placed second.



Top placers in the JAKES division were: 1st – Dillan Murphy (r), and 2nd – Chris Drake (l).



Judges for the Mississippi Championship turkey calling contest included (l-r) Tony Bishop, Ernie Herrington, Ron Seiss, Billy Blocker, Demsey White, not pictured – Shane Hendershot.

MDWFP — A Great Partner for the NWTF

Partnerships are extremely important in helping the National Wild Turkey Federation achieve its mission. From volunteers, local sponsors, to national sponsors, the NWTF relies on strong working relationships and partner support to help us make a difference for wild turkeys and hunters.

Some of the most important partnerships the NWTF maintains are those with state and federal wildlife management agencies. Working together, we have made great strides toward restoration of the wild turkey in North America, protection and enhancement of habitat, and increasing hunter opportunity.

The partnership between the Mississippi Chapter of the NWTF and the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks is a great example of what we can accomplish by creating and maintaining strong working relationships. We are blessed in Mississippi with a state wildlife agency that wants to work with the NWTF and together we have accomplished much. From cooperative habitat enhancement projects, law enforcement support, and wild turkey research to the newly formed Cooperative NWTF/MDWFP Biologist position, the Mississippi Chapter and MDWFP have worked together to advance the missions of both the organization and the agency.

On behalf of all of the great NWTF volunteers in Mississippi, the Mississippi Chapter wishes to thank the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks for your past and continued support and partnership.

Local Chapters and Volunteers Recognized at Mississippi Chapter NWTf Awards Banquet

Local NWTf chapters and volunteers were recognized for their hard work at the Mississippi Chapter NWTf Awards Banquet held February 1 at Bass Pro Shops in Pearl. Numerous awards were given to recognize the accomplishments of the many people who make NWTf a success at the local and state level. Attendees were also treated to a turkey calling demonstration by Shane Hendersot, the 2007 Wild Turkey Grand National Calling Champion.



Past Presidents of the Mississippi Chapter NWTf were recognized at the state awards banquet. Pictured are: (l to r) Steve Gullede, Robert Higginbotham, Jack Woods, Gene Davis, Kenny Odom, Revel Rawlings, and Billy Blocker.



Robert Higginbotham, past president and current member of the Mississippi Chapter NWTf Board of Directors, was recently elected to the NWTf National Board of Directors. He will be the first and only national board member from Mississippi.



The Pike-Amite Chapter and Tallahala Longbeards Chapter were recognized for outstanding JAKES events in 2007. Bob Matthew accepted the first place ribbon on behalf of the Pike-Amite chapter and James Bryant accepted the second place ribbon on behalf of the Tallahala Longbeards Chapter.



2007 JAKES Hunt of a Lifetime recipient Ryan Cade is pictured with Dean Davis with Bass Pro Shops and Keith Burgess with Primos Game Calls.



Mississippi Chapter Vice President Scott Cumbest presented awards to outstanding MDWFP employees: (l to r) Coyt Wayne Gordon, WMA Manager of the Year; Sylvester Busby, Law Enforcement Officer of the Year; John McFerrin, Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Finalist; and Tyler Norman, Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Finalist.

Partners in the 2007 Wheelin' Sportsmen Youth Deer Hunt were recognized for their contributions. Pictured (l to r) are: Joe Wood (NWTF), Brian Sartain (Greater Jackson Chapter), Bob Spell (Greater Jackson Chapter), Chris McDonald (MDWFP), Dean Davis (Bass Pro Shops), Chad Dacus (MDWFP), James Bryant (Tallahala Longbeards Chapter).



Gary Barber accepts an award for the efforts he and the Okatibbee Chapter put into hosting the 2007 Mississippi State Calling Contest.



Mississippi Chapter NWTF Vice President Scott Cumbest presented the 2007 Communicator of the Year award to Steve Gullede.



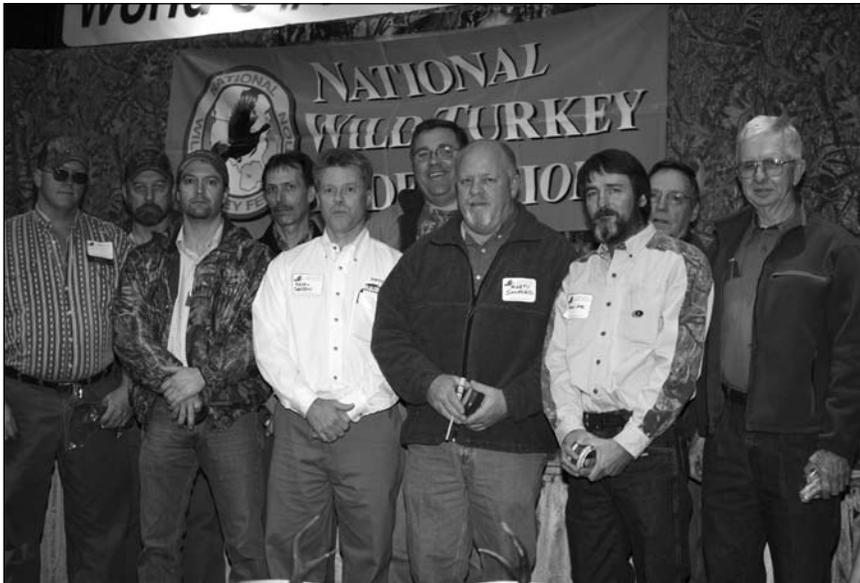
James Bryant (l) from the Tallahala Longbeards Chapter and who serves on the Mississippi Chapter NWTF Board of Directors was presented the 2007 Outstanding State Chapter Board Member award.



Andy (l) and Juanita Hollinghead (c) from the Greene County Chapter and Art Mott (r) from the Lawrence County Chapter accept 3rd place ribbons in the most JAKES members award category.



Local chapter representatives accepted awards for the highest net dollars raised at a banquet. Pictured (l to r) are: Brian Sartain, Greater Jackson Chapter (1st); Art Mott, Lawrence County Chapter (4th); Kenny Wayne Halford, Miss-Lou Chapter (3rd); Rocky Steen, Three Rivers Chapter (2nd).



Callmakers who contributed turkey calls to the 2007 Mississippi Turkey Call Makers' Collection were recognized.

WITO Coordinator Abby Coffman (l) presents a 3rd place ribbon to the Pearl River County Chapter and a 1st place ribbon to the Pearl River Chapter for the most WITO members award category.



National Wild Turkey Federation Membership Application

My \$30.00 annual membership dues are enclosed. Please send my six issues of *Turkey Call* magazine to the address provided below.

Also, I would like to get more involved. Please let me know how I can learn more about your banquet program.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (Home) _____ (Office) _____

■ Mail to: National Wild Turkey Federation / P.O. Box 530 Edgefield, SC 29824

1-800-THE-NWTF



National Wild Turkey Federation
P.O. Box 530
Edgefield, SC 29824

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**Long Beards & Curved Spurs:
Mississippi Wild Turkey
Records**

Mississippi Wild Turkey Records

ALL WILD TURKEYS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED TROPHIES, BUT SOME ARE MORE IMPRESSIVE THAN OTHERS. THEREFORE, hunters annually contact the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks (MDWFP) to find out how their bird compares to those harvested by others. Due to the interest from turkey hunters, the MDWFP has started a database for gobblers harvested in Mississippi. The purpose for maintaining turkey records is to allow sportsmen to recognize and fully appreciate the quality of individual turkeys.

Turkey records are presented for the following categories: Top Scoring Typical, Top Scoring Non-typical, Heaviest, Longest Spurs, and Longest Beard. Non-typical turkeys have multiple beards. Total score is obtained by adding the turkey's weight plus 10 times the combined length of both spurs plus 2 times beard length. Weight should be measured to the nearest ounce on certified scales. Beards are measured in 1/16 inch increments from the center point of the beard's base where it attaches to the skin to the end of the longest bristle. Spurs are measured in 1/16 inch increments along the outside center of the spur from the point at which the spur protrudes from the scaled leg skin to the tip of the spur. All weights and measurements should be converted to decimals. A registration form is provided in this report for those who wish to have their harvested gobbler included in the Mississippi Wild Turkey Records. For a complete listing of records, visit the Agency's website at www.mdwfp.com.

Top Scoring Typical

Rank	Score	Date Harvested	County Harvested	Hunter
1	80.57	4/8/2005	Smith	Amp Frith
2	79.20	4/18/2003	Copiah	Doug Borries
3	77.75	3/29/2007	Alcorn	Mike Sutor
4	77.00	3/28/1987	Kemper	Robby Ellis
5	76.70	4/13/2005	Pearl River	Kris Collins
6	76.10	4/13/2004	Lowndes	Chris Herring
7	76.00	4/16/2007	Lauderdale	Dr. Don E. Marascalo
	76.00	4/5/1997	Jefferson Davis	Shay Stephens
9	75.57	4/6/2002	Monroe	Monty R. Roberts
10	75.05	3/30/2004	Newton	Hunter T. Hayes
11	74.75	3/26/2002	Scott	Michael Walker
12	74.66	4/7/2001	Grenada	Todd Roberts
13	74.63	3/23/1998	Warren	Freddy Gaumnitz
14	74.50	3/24/2007	Claiborne	James D. Greer
15	74.33	4/8/2000	Kemper	Terry Frierson
16	74.25	4/8/2000	Leake	Ronald D. Coleman
17	74.13	4/30/2002	Alcorn	Larry Muse
18	73.80	3/23/2004	Scott	Justin Rogers
19	73.76	4/2/2003	Jefferson	Thomas McAlpin, Jr.
20	73.62	4/12/2001	Attala	Caleb Cain

The beard on this gobbler measures 17.25 inches and is number one in the state.



Top Scoring Non-Typical

Rank	Score	Number Beards	Total Length	Date Harvested	County Harvested	Hunter
1	148.3	7	52.69	3/28/2002	Amite	James R. Scheer
2	143.17	9	53.26	3/20/2000	Marion	Andy Stinger
3	139.26	8	52.69	3/23/1998	Scott	Richard Latham
4	135.72	9	52.86	4/14/2005	Tishomingo	Jerry Smith
5	134.98	5	45.50	3/24/2001	Alcorn	Mike Suiter
6	131.895	5	45.94	4/21/2001	Noxubee	Will Austin
7	130.25	5	44.25	3/24/1989	Hinds	Robbie Barlow
8	126.04	5	43.07	4/14/2006	Warren	Kenneth Grogan, IV
9	125.75	5	42.38	4/3/1995	Calhoun	Walter Mitchell
10	125.6875	4	38.75	4/11/1986	Noxubee	Robert E. Persons
11	124.28	6	43.14	3/15/2006	Jefferson	Bobby Hughes
12	122.86	6	43.63	3/22/2000	Tishomingo	Jeff Stephens
13	122.64	7	41.59	3/28/2003	Marion	Wade McKenzie
14	121.375	7	42.25	4/29/1989	Coahoma	Harold C. Wall
15	117.8	4	37.50	4/24/2004	Hinds	Jason L. Morrow
16	117.5	5	38.75	4/3/2000	Madison	Darren Johnson
17	117.48	6	39.44	3/22/2004	Smith	Danny Joe Young
18	115.78	6	37.89	4/18/2005	Marion	Chick Bourne
19	115.27	4	36.95	3/28/2004	Claiborne	Billy Vandevender
20	115.08	6	41.69	4/10/2001	Greene	Bernie J. Dearman, Jr.

Longest Beard

Rank	Beard Length	Date Harvested	County Harvested	Hunter
1	17.25	4/30/2001	Monroe	Monty Roberts
2	16.25	4/8/2005	Smith	Amp Frith
3	16.00	4/6/2002	Monroe	Monty R. Roberts
4	15.00	3/28/2003	Marshall	Carlton Gibson
5	14.75	4/4/2007	Claiborne	Dale Collins
6	14.19	4/10/2003	Monroe	Charles C. Langley
7	14.13	3/19/1989	Wilkinson	Todd Thomas D'Aquin
8	14.00	4/8/2000	Kemper	Terry Frierson
	14.00	4/15/1981	Jefferson Davis	Robert W. Polk
10	13.75	3/30/2002	Covington	Owen Cole
	13.75	3/27/2003	Lawrence	William J. Smith
12	13.63	4/9/2004	Leake	Brian Terrell
13	13.50	4/10/2001	Attala	James C. Cain
14	13.00	4/19/1997	Neshoba	Darron Smith
	13.00	4/24/2003	Benton	Steve King
	13.00	4/8/2001	Holmes	Richard Wiman
17	12.75	3/12/2000	Madison	Joshua Shumaker
	12.75	4/22/1989	Bolivar	Charles E. Gramling
	12.75	3/27/2006	Simpson	Jeffery Walker
	12.75	3/24/2007	Lee	John Robbins

Longest Spurs

Rank	Spur Length	Date Harvested	County Harvested	Hunter
1	1.88	4/16/2007	Lauderdale	Dr. Don E. Marascalco
2	1.81	4/30/1990	Claiborne	Marvin Muirhead
3	1.75	4/13/2005	Pearl River	Kris Collins
	1.75	4/8/2000	Leake	Ronald D. Coleman
	1.75	4/5/2000	Copiah	Rickey Thompson
	1.75	4/17/2004	Chickasaw	Mike Soper
	1.75	4/2/2003	Jefferson	Thomas McAlpin, Jr.
	1.75	3/24/2007	Claiborne	James D. Greer
4	1.69	4/13/2004	Lowndes	Chris Herring
	1.69	3/26/2002	Scott	Michael Walker
	1.69	4/11/2004	Rankin	Michael Willoughby
	1.69	3/25/2000	Choctaw	Zach Crowley
5	1.63	4/18/2003	Copiah	Doug Borries
	1.63	4/17/1999	Leake	Roger D. Latham
	1.63	4/29/2002	Clarke	Gary D. Rodgers
	1.63	4/7/2000	Covington	Jeffrey Daniel Adams
	1.63	3/26/1989	Rankin	Richard Latham
	1.63	4/5/1997	Jefferson Davis	Shay Stephens
	1.63	4/21/1986	Coahoma	J. C. Gilbert
	1.63	4/13/1985	Jasper	Robert B. Caston
	1.63		Warren	Don G. Presley
	1.63	4/27/2006	Warren	Zachary Smith
	1.63	4/7/2000	Covington	Jeffery Daniel Adams
6	1.62		Issaquena	Skip Holifield
	1.62	4/2/2005	Alcorn	Frank Meador
7	1.56	4/20/1989	Yazoo	Larry Merrell
	1.56	3/23/2004	Scott	Justin Rogers
	1.56	4/7/2001	Grenada	Todd Roberts
	1.56	4/11/2002	Scott	Richard Latham
	1.56	4/10/2004	George	Billy Smith
	1.56	3/20/2001	Franklin	Mike Harrell
	1.56	4/20/2003	Marion	Mike Williamson
	1.56	4/3/2005	Neshoba	Robin W. Risher
8	1.53	4/15/2000	Scott	Daniel W. Nester



This gobbler holds the new state record for spur length. The bird was harvested by Dr. Don Marascalco during the 2007 spring season.

Heaviest

Rank	Weight	Date Harvested	County Harvested	Hunter
1	25.25	3/30/2004	Newton	Hunter T. Hayes
2	25.19	3/26/2004	Neshoba	John Robb
3	24.68	4/18/2003	Copiah	Doug Borries
4	24.44	4/2/2005	Neshoba	Chad Young
5	23.94	3/18/2005	Chickasaw	Brian Fikes
6	23.75	4/22/1996	Monroe	Jeff Daniel
	23.75	3/29/2007	Alcorn	Mike Suitor
8	23.69	3/28/2005	Prentiss	Doug Taylor Jr.
9	23.50	3/24/1990	Jefferson Davis	Danny Sinclair
10	23.38	4/8/1995	Sharkey	R. Revel Rawlings
11	23.19	4/13/2000	Pearl River	J. B. Hodge
12	23.00	4/14/2006	Holmes	Joseph Mohamed
13	22.87	3/24/2000	Choctaw	Tommy Trussell
14	22.75	3/25/1995	Tishomingo	Phil Byram
15	22.60	3/28/2002	Monroe	Derwin (Dee) Riley
16	22.56	4/9/2000	Madison	Rebecca Case
17	22.50	3/25/2003	Calhoun	Brad Perkins
18	22.43	3/13/2004	Monroe	Kody Riley
19	22.24	4/19/2003	Marion	Jeff Armstrong
20	22.22	3/28/2005	Simpson	Eddy McQueen

National Records — Eastern Wild Turkey

<p>■ Top Scoring Typical Score:104.81 Date: 04/22/99 State: Kentucky</p>	<p>■ Top Scoring Non-Typical Number of Beards:8 Total Length: 70.88 Total Score: 194.00 Date: 04/19/89 State: Wisconsin</p>	<p>■ Longest Beard Beard Length:18.12 Date: 05/02/98 State: Virginia</p>	<p>■ Heaviest Weight:35.81 Date: 04/28/01 State: Iowa</p>	<p>■ Longest Spurs Spur Length: 2.25 Date: 04/22/99 State: Kentucky</p>
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This 9-bearded gobbler harvested by Andy Stringer currently ranks second for top scoring non-typicals.

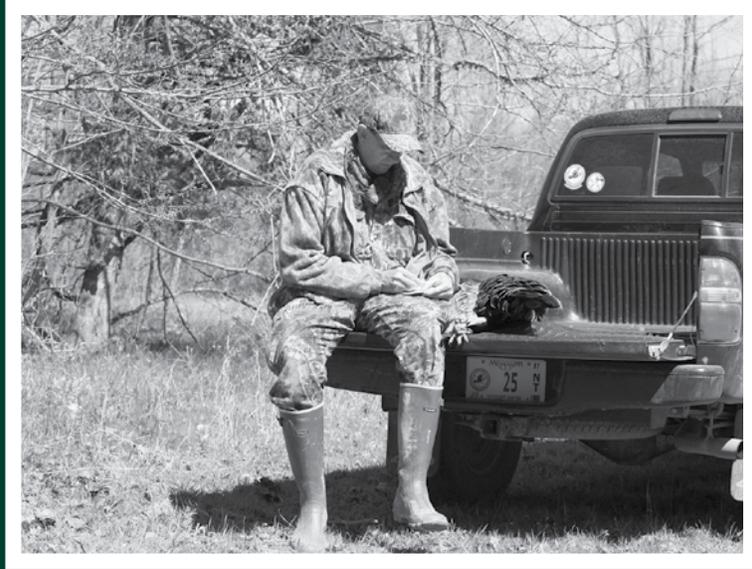


Photo by Steve Gulledge

Ways I Can Help Conserve Mississippi's Wild Turkey

Spring Gobbler Hunting Survey Application

THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, AND PARKS IS LOOKING FOR INDIVIDUAL hunters and hunting clubs interested in participating in the annual Spring Gobbler Hunting Survey. Cooperators are asked to record various information about their spring gobbler hunts. Harvest and population data provided by cooperators will be used to monitor and manage Mississippi's wild turkey resource. Results will be summarized in the annual Mississippi Wild Turkey Report. A copy of this report will be sent to all cooperators. Hunting clubs also will receive a summary report for their individual property.

If your hunting club or any individual members are interested, please complete and return the application below. If you participated in the survey last year, you will automatically receive data collection materials and do not have to complete this application. This is an opportunity to be directly involved with conservation and management of the wild turkey in Mississippi. Please encourage other turkey hunters to participate. This application may be copied. Data collection instructions and materials, along with the turkey program report will be sent to you prior to spring gobbler season.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: (Home) _____ (Office) _____

Please complete the following information only if your hunting club wants to participate.

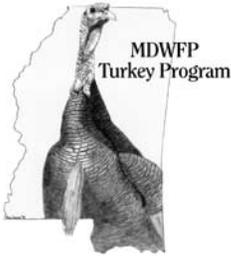
Club Name: _____

County: _____

Forested Acres: (including food plots) _____

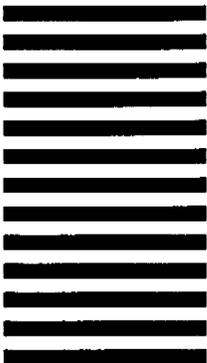
Estimate Total Number of Hunts Anticipated on this Property During the Turkey Season: _____

■ Mail application to: Spring Gobbler Hunting Survey / 1505 Eastover Dr. / Jackson, MS 39211-6322





JACKSON, MS 39211-9940
 1505 EASTOVER DRIVE
 MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE, FISHERIES AND PARKS



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Wild Turkey Disease Mortality Form

THE MDWFP IS TRYING TO DOCUMENT WILD TURKEY MORTALITY CAUSED BY DISEASE. MONITORING DISEASE mortality will provide information to assess the impacts of disease and to better manage the wild turkey resource. Sportsmen can play an important role by reporting sick or dead turkeys and assisting the MDWFP 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 MDWFP if you observe or have previously observed a sharp decline in a local turkey population.

■ **Handling Turkeys:** Sick turkeys may be submitted alive if they can be humanely restrained for transport. Carcasses 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 and to submit the bird as soon as possible. If the turkey cannot be obtained by the MDWFP within 48 hours, it can be frozen as long as necessary.

■ **Contacting the MDWFP:** Contact Turkey Program Coordinator Dave Godwin at 662.325.5119 as soon as possible. If are unable to contact Dave Godwin, please call the Jackson Office at 601.432.2199 or contact your local MDWFP District Office.

■ **Recording Information:** Please record the following information and submit this form with the turkey.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: (Home) _____ (Office) _____

Date Turkey(s) Found: _____

Location (county and nearest town): _____

Description of Turkey(s) When Found: _____

Additional Comments: _____



Turkey hen with avian pox.

Mississippi Wild Turkey Records Registration Form

Hunter's Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____ (Home) _____ (Work)

Hunting License Number: _____

■ **How to measure your turkey:** *Weight should be measured to the nearest ounce on certified scales. Beards are measured in 1/16 inch increments from the center point of the beard's base where it attaches to the skin to the end of the longest bristle that is fully attached to the skin. Spurs are measured in 1/16 inch increments along the outside center of the spur from the point at which the spur protrudes from the scaled leg skin to the tip of the spur.*

**Weight of Turkey (in pounds and ounces): _____

Total Beard Length (measure in 1/16 inch increments): _____

For multiple beards: Beard 1: _____ Beard 2: _____ Beard 3: _____

Beard 4: _____ Beard 5: _____ Beard 6: _____

Spur Length (measure in 1/16 inch increments): Left: _____ Right: _____

Date of Harvest: _____ County of Harvest: _____

■ **Certification by Hunter:** *I hereby certify that the above information is correct and that I harvested this wild turkey in the spirit of fair chase and in compliance with all applicable wildlife laws. I further certify that this turkey was a wild and free-ranging bird, was not confined by any artificial barrier, and was not released for the purpose of commercial hunting.*

Hunter's Signature: _____ Date: _____

**Turkeys weighing over 21 pounds must be weighed to the nearest ounce on certified scales. Turkeys with a weight of over 21 pounds, spurs greater than 1.25 inches *or* beard length greater than 12 inches must be witnessed by a current employee of the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks.

Signature of MDWFP Employee: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

■ Mail to: Wild Turkey Records / 1505 Eastover Dr. / Jackson, MS 39211



Wild Turkey Records
1505 Eastover Drive
Jackson, MS 39211

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2008 Turkey Report Evaluation

THE STATEWIDE TURKEY PROGRAM CONTINUALLY STRIVES TO IMPROVE THE ANNUAL TURKEY REPORT. YOUR input is important and will be considered when preparing future reports. Please complete this evaluation and return it to the MDWFP according to mailing instructions on back of the form. Comments may also be provided by contacting Small Game & Wild Turkey Program Coordinator Dave Godwin at 662.325.5119 or dgodwin@cfr.mdwfp.state.ms.us.com.

1. Please rate the following turkey report sections:

2008 MISSISSIPPI WILD TURKEY REPORT					
<i>Please Circle Your Rating</i>					
	Poor	Neutral			Excellent
■ Overall Section: <i>How are Turkeys in My Neck of the Woods?</i>	1	2	3	4	5
■ Overall Section: <i>Magnolia State Turkey Talk</i>	1	2	3	4	5
■ Overall Section: <i>Long Beards & Curved Spurs: Magnolia State Turkey Records</i>	1	2	3	4	5
■ Overall Section: <i>Ways I Can Help Conserve Mississippi's Wild Turkey</i>	1	2	3	4	5

2. What kind of articles and subject matter would you like to see in future reports? _____

3. Please provide any ideas you may have that could improve future reports: _____

4. Do you want to receive the 2009 Mississippi Wild Turkey Report? _____



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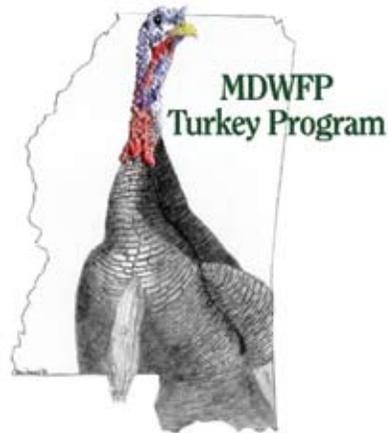
Take a Walk on the 'Wild' Side... (of the Web, that is.)



FOR COMPREHENSIVE INFORMATION ABOUT MISSISSIPPI'S WILD TURKEY AND OTHER WILDLIFE, visit our website at www.mdwfp.com. On the home page, click '*Everything you want to know about your favorite wildlife.*' You will find: ■ Interactive question and answer forums ■ Management and biology articles ■ Turkey and deer records ■ Photo galleries, hunting forecasts, and more.

MS Chapter NWTF
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Starkville, MS 39759

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**The 2008 Mississippi Wild Turkey Report is a
cooperative effort between the MDWFP Turkey Program
and the Mississippi Chapter of the NWTF.**



The MDWFP is an equal opportunity employer and provider of programs and services. If anyone believes they have been subjected to discrimination on the basis of political affiliation, race, color, national origin, marital status, sex, religion, creed, age, or disability, they may file a complaint alleging discrimination with either the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks, Office of Administrative Services, P.O. Box 451, Jackson, MS 39205-0451, or the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 1801 L. Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20507.