

Turkey Hunting License Benefits

By Don Heckman, PA Chapter NWTF Executive Officer
Wild Turkey Management Committee Chairman, August 21, 2008

PA Chapter NWTF supports the need for a turkey hunting license. We continue to inform our members and all turkey hunters of the benefits of supporting a turkey hunting license, and how revenue generated from the sale of a turkey hunting license could be used to benefit turkey hunters and the wild turkey resource.

In the PGC "Management Plan For Wild Turkeys In Pennsylvania" 6 objectives and 47 strategies are defined for managing the resource. The management plan needs to be fully funded to effectively complete the 47 management strategies outlined in the plan.

How Will a Turkey Hunting License Help?

- Improved and more detailed information on wild turkey harvest densities will be available.
- As state-wide wild turkey populations increase better research data will provide additional information biologists need to make future management decisions.
- Leg banding and radio telemetry studies will provide better research data and information to the Game Commission for their needs to make more informed management decisions.
- More habitat improvement projects helping to increase turkey populations and improve all wildlife habitats.
- Turkey hunter safety material will be provided directly to turkey hunters. Turkey hunting safety could be improved.
- Better law enforcement aimed specifically at wild turkey violations.
- Determine how many turkey hunters there are in Pennsylvania, allowing biologists to make turkey management decision recommendations based on actual turkey hunter density numbers, not on estimates.
- Turkey hunter opinions and satisfaction levels will be acquired more efficiently because the Game Commission will be able to contact turkey hunters directly.
- The Game Commission's wild turkey management plan will be more fully funded and more successful.

How Will the Turkey Hunter Benefit?

- Funds will provide turkey hunters with specific turkey hunting and turkey biology information, turkey hunting safety and ethics material.
- Turkey hunter surveys will give you the ability to express your concerns and opinions about turkey management in Pennsylvania.
- Additional funds could be used for purchasing more game lands, providing additional public lands to hunt.
- Habitat enhancement projects on state and federal lands will attract turkeys to these lands, providing additional hunting opportunities.
- Better research data and hunting information about our turkey populations could result in expanded hunting opportunities in the future.

Why Should Turkey Hunters Support a Turkey Hunting License?

- Wild turkey populations peaked above 400,000 in 2001; spring 2007 population is 329,500, above the previous 10 year average of 314,900.
- With more than 310,000 estimated turkey hunter's additional state-wide wild turkey research needs to be completed, obtaining better data on state-wide population and harvest densities, hunter densities, and improved turkey hunter safety education and informational material needs to be developed.
- A steady source of funding for the management plan will allow the Game Commission to manage wild turkeys and turkey hunting more efficiently and effectively.
- PGC current wild turkey management plan, which specifies how the Game Commission is to manage wild turkeys through the year 2015, was signed on February 21, 2007. Management plan objectives and strategies including the wild turkey population model needs to be fully funded to support wild turkey management.

Our wild turkey resource is a valuable asset to Pennsylvania. During the past 20 years Pennsylvania Game Commission has completed wild turkey restoration throughout the Commonwealth. Wild turkey management is now shifting focus to acquiring additional turkey population and turkey hunter management data while helping Pennsylvania remain a leading wild turkey research and resource management state.

A turkey hunting license would be able to fund additional wild turkey research, improve methods to provide better wild turkey management data, provide turkey hunter information and safety material, support increased habitat management programs, and ensure a bright future for the wild turkey in Pennsylvania.

For further information on wild turkey management look on: www.panwtf.org

PGC web site link wild turkey management plan:

http://www.pgc.state.pa.us/pgc/lib/pgc/wildturkey/turkey_plan.pdf