

**PA Chapter NWTF Wild Turkey Management Committee Report
March 7, 2010 PANWTF March Board Meeting
Submitted by Don Heckman, WTM Committee**

Wild Turkey Management changes requiring PGC Staff and Commissioner overview.

- 1) Support PGC Management Plan For Wild Turkeys In Pennsylvania, 2006-2015, goal, 8 objectives 47 strategies, with measurement timeline outlined, plans needs to be fully funded over the 10 years; plan schedule not being fully funded.
- 2) Northeast Wild Turkey Population Model – implement in wild turkey management plan – PA NWTF has \$15,000 invested in development; model data and modeling results are requirements for future wild turkey management decisions; no current update on data or model implementation.
- 3) Recommendation to extend last day of spring gobbler season to May 31, permanently --- Commissioner's approved May 31, 2010, and proposed rule making at January 25 Commissioner's meeting for May 31, 2011. PANWTF comments to Board of Commissioners during January 2010 meeting included recommendation for making May 31 a permanent closing day for spring gobbler season. If May 31 would be a Sunday, May 30 would be the closing day.
- 4) Recommendation for Mentored Youth Hunting to including fall turkey hunting season in regulation starting in 2010 or 2011; HB 281 Mentored Youth Fall Hunting passed House; is currently being held up in the Senate Appropriations Committee. PANWTF needs to support HB 281 to allow "tag sharing" with Mentored Youth Hunters and then work with PGC to get their support to including fall turkey hunting with fall deer[doe] hunting. PGC hang up is tag sharing.
- 5) Recommendation to expand youth spring gobbler season and regular spring gobbler season to all day hunting after 4 year gobbler leg band research project is completed in 2009, project evaluation will be completed in 2010, and recommendations will be documented. As of March 1, 2010 gobbler leg band study results have not been finalized or released to the hunting public.
- 6) Recommendation to expand youth spring gobbler to more than one day.
- 7) Continue recommendations to reduce or increase WMU fall season lengths as management plan setting fall season guidelines are determined; using management data based on current field data and indices, harvest densities, population densities, and hunter densities, as charted measurements outlined in the wild turkey management plan; when management data supports regulation change. PGC approved and scheduled Hen Harvest Rate Banding and Telemetry Study will be basis for season changes and recommendations; estimate hen wild turkey harvest rates; determine effects of changing fall season lengths on harvest rates of hen wild turkeys.
- 8) State-wide gobbler leg band research – 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 4 year study is completed. NWTF and PANWTF research project financial support was **\$150,416** from NWTF Grant In Aid and PA Chapter NWTF Hunting Heritage Super Fund for research project equipment and trapping materials. PGC funded administrative, staff and transportation requirements, other agency project expenses. Mary Jo has updated Board in her Tech Committee Reports on all aspects of research project to-date. I removed any final date schedule for results completion. Four year state-wide gobbler leg band study final analysis has been completed; final results and hunting public announcements will be completed soon.
- 9) PGC submitted Fall Hen Harvest Rates Study to NWTF Technical Committee requesting funding for state-wide hen research/telemetry study for 4 years – 2010-2013. The request for NWTF Grant-in-Aid Research Project funding was not accepted for 2010. Bob Boyd resubmitted and presented NWTF Grant-In-Aid proposal for 2011-2013. NWTF Tech Committee is reviewing proposal. Mary Jo presented Hen Harvest Rate Study Executive Summary at January 2010 Board meeting. PANWTF continues evaluation state chapter project funding for remaining 3 years.
- 10) Wild Turkey Biologists Spring Options white paper is being finalized for PGC Executive Staff and Commissioner's review. PANWTF is waiting on final paper to review strategies and recommendations, and to see where PANWTF must shift support or gears to work with PGC and turkey biologists on recommendations.

Legislation changes require Governor signature.

- 1) PGC hunting license increase legislation – SB 740 in Senate Game and Fisheries Committee. PANWTF continues years of support for PGC additional hunting license revenue, and supporting alternative funding option recommendations. Turkey Hunting License – continue with our position statement, articles and news release supporting need for combined spring and fall turkey hunting license, support fully funded wild turkey management plan to complete yearly objectives and strategies. No Senate movement on hunting license increase or alternative funding legislation.
- 2) Support Sunday hunting as regulated by PGC, required legislation to change Title 34 Game Code. No House movement on Sunday hunting legislation.
- 3) Do not support legislation [Title 34 Game Code] through legislative wording that changes PGC hunting seasons, bag limits, and shooting hours. PGC hunting seasons, bag limits, and shooting hours are changed by Board of Commissioners through PGC Regulation [Title 58 Code].
- 4) PANWTF Legislative Committee Report details legislative bills working through the process or have been signed by the Governor.

Other Committee actions requiring PA Chapter NWTF Board participation and overview.

- 1) PANWTF Spring Turkey Hunter Cooperative Program for Spring 2010 will be starting in March. Jim will review program at March Board meeting.

Other Committee actions requiring PGC Staff and Commissioner participation and overview.

- 1) Turkey hunter safety and ethics – Comprehensive PGC wild turkey hunter safety - NWTF Turkey Hunter Safety DVD provided to PGC HTE classes and availability to general hunting public; helping PGC reach out to 300,000+- turkey hunters with additional turkey hunter safety and ethics information and material; PA Edition NWTF Turkey Hunting Success and Safety brochure; NWTF Turkey Hunter Safety Task Force material;
- 2) Annually review of meeting minutes from PGC Executive Staff and PA NWTF June meeting as provided by PGC Wild Turkey Biologist Mary Jo Casalena. Final 2009 meeting minutes have been forwarded to PGC Staff and PANWTF Board. Important wild turkey management criteria and decision making changes have been accomplished since these joint partnership yearly meetings started back in the mid 1980's. Continue request for PGC wild turkey biologist to update PA Chapter Board at the January and June board meetings on status of Objectives and Strategies as outlined in the PGC Management Plan For Wild Turkeys In Pennsylvania.
- 3) NWTF wild turkey management outreach programs - Wild Turkey Woodlands, Habitat Management, Safety Education, Land Acquisition, Conservation seed programs, Project HELP, Operation Appleseed, Operation Oak, Get In The Game, other budgeted NWTF outreach programs and HHSF Super Fund expenditures, support funding for NWTF's Pennsylvania Comprehensive Wild Turkey Management Plan, continue distributing PANWTF news releases and articles in Turkey Talk, Tell The Story – Pass It On.

NWTF North American Wild Turkey Management Plan.

- 1) Pennsylvania Comprehensive Wild Turkey Management Plan - support management plan objectives and recommendations, provide for fully funded management plan criteria as directed by NWTF Wild Turkey Biologist and NWTF Conservation Programs.