

**NWTF Technical Committee Representatives' Report - PA Chapter NWTF
Board of Directors Meeting, July 31, 2010**

Submitted by: Mary Jo Casalena, Wildlife Biologist II, and Robert C. Boyd, Assistant Director, Bureau of Wildlife Management, PA Game Commission

Harvest Management

Preliminary 2010 spring turkey harvest from initial harvests (not including harvests from the special turkey license) was approximately 43,201. Harvests from the special turkey license will be finalized after all mandatory reports are received. The preliminary initial harvest is 6% above the previous 3-year average and 10% above the previous 10-year average. This increase most likely is due to the above average summer reproduction two and three years ago. Of the 13,599 Special turkey licenses sold, approximately 15% of license holders have returned their mandatory report cards. We are sending a reminder letter to 1,000 randomly selected nonrespondents, as done each year, to accurately estimate harvest.

Wild Turkey Hen Harvest Rates and Annual Survival Rates Study

I worked with PCFWRU at Penn State and PGC Regional staff regarding data management and locating transmitters from mortalities. We are monitoring 33 transmitted hens (of 61). One transmitter was censored (died within one week of capture) and two stopped transmitting in late April (transmitters destroyed, underwater, or underground in an animal den). Causes of mortality for the remaining 25 hens were: one research caused (transmitter cord too tight and caused infection), 3 unknown, 3 predation (unknown predator), 2 possibly illegally killed, 8 from mammalian predation, (including one fox predation, two coyote predation and one incubating hen killed by a black bear) and 8 from avian predation (hawk or owl). Nineteen transmitted hens have been killed by predators since the last week of April. This increased mortality is a natural aspect of turkey nesting season. We are preparing for the upcoming late summer leg banding season (mid-August to mid-September) when we will leg band an additional 150 hens (75 per Study Area), focusing on brood flocks to obtain a sample of leg banded juvenile hens to estimate fall harvest rates by age. Transmitters recovered from mortalities will be redeployed. Only two of the 239 female turkeys that were only leg banded have been reported. One from March 26 (leg bone with leg band found) and one road killed on July 2.

Gobbler Spring Harvest Rates and Annual Survival Rates Study

Gobbler legband returns as of 28 July: 89; 9 of which were banded this past winter in conjunction with hen banding activities and the remaining 80 were banded during previous years as part of the gobbler harvest rate study. Eight banded males were harvested by youth during the youth season, two were harvested in New Jersey during the NJ gobbler season and one was banded in Ohio and harvested in Beaver County on the opening day of our regular season. Leg band reporters are very appreciative of learning where and when the turkeys were banded. The PCFWRU at Penn State final report, is still being reviewed by the 3 states involved. The report will be submitted to NWTF when complete, and a manuscript submitted to the Journal of Wildlife Management later this summer.

Annual Cooperative PGC/NWTF/PANWTF Meeting

This meeting, held June 10 at the PGC headquarters, emphasizes the partnership between the PGC and NWTF/PANWTF and demonstrates the health and importance of this partnership. The PGC Executive Office and all pertinent PGC Bureaus participate. Sixteen topics were discussed and 19 action items were identified for completion during the year.

Information and Education

MJ Casalena met with the Bureau of I&E regarding the PGC wild turkey web page because most items and links on the page were lost when the agency migrated to a different web style. All were located and/or revised and new information is being added such that the web page will be operational shortly.

MJ Casalena assisted with an annual NRA sponsored Turkey Hunting Clinic in Johnstown. Attendance was twice that of recent years, about 25.

Citations made during Spring Gobbler Season using the Turkey Decoys funded by the Michaux Yellow Breeches Chapter

Adams Co., WMU 5A. Wildlife Conservation officers cited one man and his 16-year old nephew (shooter). The youth shot out the window at his uncle's urging. When the bird fell over, they fled the scene, until the WCOs caught them. The man also had his 10-year old son in the back seat, whom he was "mentoring." He had been convicted of shooting deer from his vehicle at night, about 15 years ago. In another incident, one person jumped out of his vehicle and tried to call the lifeless bird to him. He received a warning because he did not shoot and was at least trying to be somewhat sporting.